

# TEEVADHARA

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## EXPANSIVE DYNAMICS OF RELIGIONS

THEOLOGY AND EVANGELIZATION, THEOLOGY FOR  
DIALOGUE AND THEOLOGY OF DIALOGUE

*John B. Chethimattam*

MYTH, RELIGION AND DEPTH PSYCHOLOGY

*Roberts Avens*

THE BUDDHIST MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

*Thomas Kochumuttam*

COMMUNION AND DEVELOPMENT

*Anto Karokaran*

THE MISSIONARY DIMENSION OF ISLAM

*George Koovackal*

AMERICAN AND INDIAN THOUGHT  
CROSS-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

*John W. Borelli*

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JEEVADHARA

# The Meeting of Religions

EXPANSIVE DYNAMICS OF RELIGIONS

Editor:

John B. Chethimattam

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Kerala, India

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# Editorial

Man is a social being and he wants to communicate his experiences and ideas to other human beings. This is particularly true about religious experience. Hence this issue of *Jeevadhara* has been devoted to a study of the expansive dynamics of religions.

In the beginning the title "Evangelization" for this issue was considered but found too exclusively a Christian term. Christianity is one of the world religions with a universal missionary outlook. Christ commanded the disciples to go out into the whole world and preach the Gospel or the Good News of salvation to all nations and peoples making disciples of them. Following that injunction of the Master the disciples with extraordinary zeal went everywhere they could and during their lifetime itself Christianity was preached all over the then known world. First the sense of urgency came from an expectation of an imminent end of the world. Then for the Roman and Byzantine emperors beginning with Constantine, who undertook the missionary task, Christianity had a special appeal since it was supposed to provide a uniform religious order for their vast empire. From the sixteenth century the Western colonial powers took up Christian missionary work as a challenge to conquer the world for Christ, the King of kings. But later the challenge was conceived as a philanthropic effort to bring "true knowledge" and all kinds of material help to the "ignorant infidels" by the light of faith and works of charity, and in recent times it has come to emphasize the basic need of a community of believers to share their faith experience with their fellowmen. This varied Christian understanding of evangelization can serve as a model for the multiform dynamics of religions to expand geographically.

But these expansive dynamics of religions have to be studied in a wider context. The most basic understanding of this universality of religious experience is apparent in mythology. Robert Avens examines this universal nature of mythology. The earliest missionary religion in history is Buddhism. It was a

religion that sociologically developed as a result of urbanisation. Gautama Buddha asked his disciples to go and preach his message in every city. Other Buddhist leaders who came after him, like Asoka, assumed it as their life task to achieve a "Dharma Vijaya", to conquer the world with the teachings of Buddha. Thomas Kochumuttam studies this expansionary history of Buddhism. Hinduism also was missionary in two ways, assuming and absorbing all it could from other religions, as well as influencing them by its own genuine insights. Anto Karokaran studies the important ideas the Hindu thinkers recognized in Christianity, and John Borelli examines the deep impact of Hindu thought on Western experience.

Perhaps the most aggressively expansionist religion in history is Islam, which is often accused of spreading itself by the sword. But as George Koovackal shows, with a study of the Koran, Islam was very tolerant of other religions and their prophets and had in view only the peaceful communication of its religious message to all men.

All these major religions of the world took for granted the unity of the human race and its own history. This was the main motive for their efforts to communicate their religious experience to others. This universalism can be present even in tribal and nationalist religions like those of Africa. But lack of space did not allow a study of this point in this issue. From what we have presented here it is clear that evangelization is not a one-way phenomenon, peculiar to one or other religion. It is intrinsic to religion itself. One who does not feel an urge to communicate his authentic experience to others is selfish and not religious at all. Hence missionary efforts should be looked upon as the honest and free dialogue between men of different faiths striving to communicate to each other their authentic understanding of the ineffable mystery of the Transcendent.

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# Theology and Evangelization, Theology for a Dialogue and Theology of a Dialogue

The title of this paper indicates two evident paradoxes in the teaching of theology in India today. Theology is mainly taught in the seminaries where ministers are trained for the preaching of the Gospel. But theology is the ongoing communitarian reflection of faith in the particular context with a certain emphasis on the changing character of the situation and dynamic character of faith that is realized in the actual situation, while apostolic ministry in a developing Church supposes the definite character of a message of salvation, a dogma, to be proclaimed and to be effectively communicated, in this case, to the Indian masses. Hence the two terms theology and evangelization imply a certain tension though an evangelization without an ongoing theological reflection is unthinkable. Similarly a theology for dialogue seems to bear a "for export only" label of its face, while a theology *of* dialogue implies an ongoing reflection on faith shared not only among the members of the Church but also with men of other faiths, even with men of no faith. The key to the resolution of these tensions, polarities and paradoxes lies in the dynamic character of faith itself, the focal point of theology.

That a certain tension existed in the past between these aspects of Christian life cannot be denied. Evangelization was mostly a practical programme implying money and men, definite projects and targets with a minimal involvement of theology. When the first draft for a conciliar decree on the missions was presented in Vatican II in 1964 the Fathers were shocked at its lack of theological content and exclusive concentration on juridical and organizational problems, and for that reason rejected it outright. Even in the decree subsequently passed in December 1965, as one of the last of the Council, the theological chapter appears to be merely an addition to, and not really the inspira-

tion of, the main body of the document which still is overweighted on the juridical and organizational side. The very modes of theology today current in the West are not capable of sustaining any meaningful missionary effort. Inspired by rationalistic brands of philosophical thinking they allow little room for the charism of the Spirit which is the main factor to be reckoned with in the missiological endeavour of the Church. Even inter-religious dialogue, which under the influence of phenomenology is conceived as the encounter of persons, has very little that is theological, or missiological about it. Hence a careful examination of the intimate relation between evangelization, theology and dialogue is of extreme importance in the creation of a meaningful theology in the Indian missionary context.

### The socio-cultural background of evangelization

Even at the beginning of the Church the understanding of 'mission' was highly coloured by the socio-cultural situation. Though the Apostles had the clear injunction of Christ to go and teach and baptize all nations and to be witnesses of the Gospel to the ends of the earth, it took a special vision for St. Peter to get over his prejudices against the Gentiles and to welcome Cornelius and his companions to baptism. It took the Apostles much longer to realize that the spread of the Gospel was not necessarily the imposition of the ritual prescriptions of Judaism. A good part of their feverish apostolic activity was prompted by a misunderstanding that the *Parousia* was imminent and hence the world had to be got ready, in a hurry, for the coming of the Lord. Historians tell us that what achieved the effective expansion of the Church in Europe was not primarily the convincing light of the Gospel, nor, as popularly believed, the blood of the martyrs, but the political power of Constantine and his Christian successors who found Christianity a unifying political force for an empire. Similarly the so-called missionary explosion of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries was more a political phenomenon than the effect of any revitalization of faith. Religion was a popular cause that could easily be manipulated to gain support for the political plan of subjugating new lands. Conquest was the missionary theme: If so much effort and so many resources could be committed for conquering new countries for the temporal sovereign, surely greater efforts and sacrifices should be made for



conquering the world for Christ. In the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch colonial ventures the missionaries were recruited by the state and supported by the king to achieve the spread of the Church along with that of the temporal kingdom. The East India Company not only did not recruit missionaries but also positively discouraged their activities, while the English missionaries like William Cares undertook the missionary effort as a mission of charity, to announce the Gospel, teach the ignorant and even sustain and support the native cultures. Various missionary associations came up throughout Europe motivated by the concern for the ignorant and suffering in foreign lands. But it has to be noted that in recent times this missionary motivation has disappeared and the missions have become mostly impersonal fund-raising, fund-distributing agencies, not very different from other charitable organizations.

### The contemporary missionary situation

Today evangelization is not one-way traffic. With the political liberation of the peoples their ancient religions too have gained a certain self-awareness and prestige. Scholars are realizing today, with surprise, that the first missionary religion in the world was not Christianity but Buddhist, which sent its missionaries into the Greek and Roman empire on a *dharmavijaya*, conquest through moral teaching, as Asoka proudly claims in his edicts. Today there are perhaps more Hindu missionaries from India in the U. S. A. than Christian missionaries from the U. S. A. in India. People are deeply conscious of their religious traditions and no superficial considerations of superiority of doctrine or excellence of organization, or an outpouring of charitable or social activities can sway their allegiances. Conversion has to involve the deepest being of man and any missionary appeal should embrace his ultimate concerns. A comparative study of religions has brought to its aid the best resources of scholarship and has shown that there is a solid ground of unity among the major religions of the world, and that their apparent differences and conflicts are often socio-cultural and political and therefore superficial. Their movements are historically convergent and do not lead, as some scholars like J. N. Farquhar at the beginning of this century thought, to the survival of the truest and fittest among them. The traditional dichotomies of true vs.

false, perfect vs. imperfect, universal vs. particular, supernatural vs. natural, do not hold good any more. Each religion has to justify its place and role in the one common salvific plan of the whole human race.

Contemporary trends in Christian theology in the West have not lent any support to missionary effort. They are mostly off shoots of philosophical thought patterns like Language Analysis, Phenomenology, Existentialism and Process Philosophy, which thrive mostly by reacting to specific local problems and concerns. For Linguistic Analysis all learning is vocabulary study, and for those who follow its thought pattern "theology is the study devoted particularly to uncovering, exploring, and interpreting the meaning" of the word 'God' "drawn from common discourse".<sup>1</sup> But the fact is that various peoples and traditions have not come to speak of 'God' in the same way, and the word does not mean the same thing to everyone. Hence if the Christian claim is "that God has specially revealed himself in and through the development of one community" and that only through the experience of that community God can be properly known,<sup>2</sup> that claim is not going to impress the nations of the world that have their own traditions built upon their own intimate experience of the Ultimate Reality. In this line of thought one is forced to admit: "It is hardly so obvious now that our salvation is to be found in Jesus Christ and him alone: in our day such phrases, repeated too often have the ring of empty jargon".<sup>3</sup>

Those who conceive of faith as an existential experience of God in the concrete situation have to admit that experience is available to all men anywhere. Kierkegaard can contend that history and tradition are barriers to that experience. Hegel can argue that only history, dogma and custom can translate the encounter with the Transcendent into synthesis of human experience.<sup>4</sup>

1. Gordon D. Kaufman. *Systematic Theology*, A Historicist Perspective, New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968, pp. 5-6.

2. *Ibid.* pp. 14-16

3. Gordon D. Kaufman. *God the Problem*, Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Univ. Press, 1972, p. 5

4. Stephen Crites. *In the Twilight of Christendom*, Hegel vs. Kierkegaard on Faith and History, Chambersburg: Am. Acad. Religion studies, 2, 1972



But the fact remains that any one who is honestly open to the Being of all beings is an "anonymous Christian."<sup>5</sup> Then it would not matter much whether he is actually labelled so or not.

Theologians who follow Phenomenology to interpret Christianity as a religious phenomenon, have to abide by its basic principle as defined by thinkers like Ricoeur, that "a religious symbol is a notion which invites conceptuality and factual content, but does not itself contain them". Hence with the collapse of traditional structures, the rise of new ones and the relation of changes in history to divine promises and the divine activity, it would be foolish for the Church to hang on to 'content' or 'facts'. "Creation, fall, providence, revelation, incarnation and atonement, *ecclesia*, word, sacrament, and eschatology: these are symbols that together express a Christian horizon of lived experience... These Christian symbols do not tell us facts; rather, they set all the facts we know, by inquiry, experience, or anticipation in a Christian form."<sup>6</sup> But, if this is all that there is to it, it is not clear why this symbol, this Christian horizon, deeply rooted in local history and culture, should be superior to other symbols and horizons, or be accepted by all. For authors like Langdon Gilkey, from whom the above statement is quoted, the whole ground of faith is not any fact or firm truth but the Holy Spirit at work in the Church (or in the world?). "Variety of opinion is the sole human way of achieving the truth: it respects individual conscience, and it balances the relativity of each position with the correction of other points of view. In effect, the ecumenical movement has provided the *new* locus for the Holy Spirit and for our faith in the continuity of Christian truth."<sup>7</sup> The author could have, with the same logic, affirmed that the *new* locus is the pooling of religious experiences in an inter-religious dialogue, and that any missionary activity would only contradict this activity of the Spirit.

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5. Langdon Gilkey, *Catholicism Confronts Modernity*, New York: Seabury Press, 1975, p. 100

6. *Ibid*, p. 81

7. A. N. Whitehead. *Process and Reality*, New York: The Free Press, 1969, pp. 36-39.



Process theologians start by giving a transcendental meaning to A. N. Whitehead's concept of God as the "unconditioned conceptual valuation of the entire multiplicity of eternal objects" causing the concretization of actual objects, and "urging towards the future based upon the appetite of the present."<sup>8</sup> Actuality is essentially an inward event, a purposive self-realization in relation to given and divine purposes. This divine intentionality is transcendent to both the structures of events and the inner transforming principle. Logos and Pneuma would be two basic aspects of this divine intentionality, the "initial aim" of the whole process that is reality. Christ is the incarnation of the Logos and for that reason the inner transforming principle of the whole world and of all humanity, the inner principle of all progress, the meaning of all meanings, that relativizes all cultural values, so that "the believer lives towards the future rather than attempting to defend, repeat or destroy the past".<sup>9</sup> The uniqueness of Christianity is that Jesus of Nazareth is a distinct incarnation of the Logos, "his very selfhood constituted by the Logos".<sup>10</sup> But this does not mean that the self-expression of the Logos in Jesus of Nazareth should be accepted by all, or that there cannot be another comparable expression of the Logos like Buddha or Krishna. This perspective would enable Christianity, in the opinion of theologians like John Cobb Jr., to combine, without embarrassment, Christian faith with the contemporary images of progress that dominate our public affairs, and even to be radically transformed in its encounter with other religions like Buddhism. But evangelization, in the circumstances, will not have any meaning.

Other contemporary theological trends in the West like Liberation Theology, Black Theology and the Theology of Hope are so much tied up with local problems and contexts that they do not provide any real basis for a world mission. The Theology of Hope drawing inspiration from Marxist ideology and trying to express, in contemporary perspective, the eschatological vision

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8. John B. Cobb jr. *Christ in a Pluralistic Age*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975, p. 59

9. *Ibid.* p. 139

10. *Rom* 1, 3

of the Gospel is so much taken up with man as the being of the possible oriented to the creation of the future that it has very little sense of the past nor of a definite message to be communicated to the world at large. Advocates of liberation in South America consider their problems so local that they do not want a "liberation theology" to be formulated at all on a global plane. Thus the idea of mission is demythologised today and even discredited, so much so that many in the West think that missions and missionaries have come to an end. There is no doubt that the various theological trends indicated above have their positive contributions that would make the Gospel relevant to the present world. But they do not provide solid ground for a World Mission to justify the command of Christ to go into the world and make disciples of all nations. If, on the other hand, the existential reality of the Church and her role in the world today, and the mode of activity of the Spirit of God are properly understood it will be clear that we are at the beginning of a new missionary era, based not on the activity and direction of foreign missionary organizations working on a world scale, but on the theological realization of faith by the local Church.

### The urgency and uniqueness of the Christian message

The intimate relationship and, at the same time, tension between theology and evangelization come from the stability of dogma and the changing character of the actual situation. Dogma, the expression of the firm belief of the Christian community, seems rather too rigid and inflexible to be relevant to the actual needs of people waiting for their salvation. But, evangelization is not an impersonal project, the delivery of an abstract creed with an "accept it or leave it" note, but personal communication of a living experience. Even in theology the philosophical framework, used as a tool for interpretation, and the actual reflection it interprets, should be clearly distinguished. In the communication of faith experience in the work of evangelization two important factors stand out in the contemporary experience. More than ever the ordinary believer has come out of the seclusion of his church and feels the need to get involved in the life and problems of people around him, and to communicate to them his own intimate experience of faith and understanding of salvation. On the other hand faith does not look any longer

like a ready-made and stereotyped doctrine to be repeated by rote by the roadside. People are not quite sure what doctrines have to be accepted as the necessary condition for faith. This lack of clarity in doctrine is more than compensated by the emphasis on action. People are more impressed by the way true believers live than by any amount of talk about their faith. Hence the actual witness of a lived faith is felt to be more important than a conceptualization and discussion of that faith itself.

Here there is a clear difference between the Christian message of salvation and faith as presented by other religions. In other religions faith is a matter of a-historical, individual, intimate experience and realization of the ultimate ground of one's personal existence, while for the Judeo-Christian tradition what is to be accepted by faith for salvation is a historical event, or a series of events, involving a whole community, if not the whole human race. For the Hindu yogi self-realization is a matter of a sudden intuitive experience of his own authentic self as rooted in the Absolute. Communicating that to others is merely trying, through inadequate human symbols, words, gestures and example, to invite others too, to create the conditions that will lead to a similar realization. History has no important role to play, much less is there a communitarian process. Buddhism looks back to the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha under the bodhi tree as a significant historical event. But that illumination has only the function of a model for others, and the Buddhist missionary movement was a *dharmavijaya*, winning people over to his teachings.

For Christians the Christ-event, the suffering, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, was a crucial historical event that radically affected the life of all men. Human history is not the same any longer, and that even for those who do not understand it or even ever heard about it. Hence Christian missionary activity is event-centred, communicating to all men what happened to them in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not just one expression of the presence and activity of the divine Logos like several others such as Buddha, Mahavira, Confucius or Mohammed, but unique as the focal point of human history at



which the divine Logos integrated himself with all human history through the incarnation and the redemptive Resurrection. The Apostles, preaching the Gospel for the first time, did not preach a new God. They did not even care to prove the divinity of Christ. Both Peter and Paul emphatically affirm that there is new world order established in Jesus Christ, raised from the dead: There is no other name to glory in under the heavens except that of Jesus. He is the Son and Saviour, and the Judge of all men.

Christianity basically assumes the unity of the human race and of its history. Originally united in the legendary ancestor Adam, it cannot gain or regain divine life, the goal of all its aspirations, through its own native powers either individually or collectively. The only way of realization of the ultimate goal is by making the divine Logos the central unit of its own organic existence, a man among men capable of influencing all men. The Incarnation is the entry of the divine Logos into human history, and through the Christ event, the death, burial and resurrection undergone by the Logos in the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, he is effectively Son of God and Son of man at the same time (*Rom.* 1: 3). The unique message of Christianity is not the moral teachings of Christ, e. g. the Sermon on the Mount, nor a specific method of experiencing God. This tradition can be matched or even surpassed by others. The unique message of Christianity is: (1) that the human race could not attain the final goal of its history, namely of attaining a share in divine life, unless the Word of God became the central member of humanity and the leader of its history, (2) that this has taken place by the self-integration of the Logos with humanity through His assumption of a complete human nature; (3) that this could and did take place only once in history in Jesus of Nazareth, and the mysteries of his life, his death, burial and resurrection, and (4) that by the resurrection and glorification of Christ in his humanity the human race as a single organism is saved and its history sacralized, so that what remains for individuals is to incorporate themselves in the victory of Christ. This perspective of human salvific history does not require any clever metaphysical analysis or any elaborate historical investigation but the simple realization that the one integral history of humanity, which cannot be ignored or

neglected by anyone, took a radical turn, some time in the past, towards salvation and is heading towards final fulfilment at the end of time under the leadership of the Lord of history.

Most other religions consider salvation purely an individual matter. Though they emphasize the need for individual perfection and fulfilment, they do not sufficiently emphasize the centrality of history and man's unity with other men. What has to be pointed out to them is that even individual salvation is not a purely individual affair but something realized with others and with their necessary help. The Gospel ideal is not that of the Buddhist bodhisattva and the Hindu sage, who first attain realization and then invite others to follow their example. It is rather a proclaiming of a common fact that all have to acknowledge publicly and realize personally. The plea, therefore, often voiced by Hindu leaders that one should preach only if one has first fully realized God is not valid with regard to the Christian task of evangelization. The object of the Christian mission is not proclaiming one's personal realization of God but announcing that human history has a common divine orientation which all have to realize together.

### **The role of theology**

This does not mean that the announcement of the Gospel is merely a journalistic report and that the aspect of personal realization and depth of religious experience from the part of the apostle, which both the Hindus and Buddhists emphasize, is unimportant. In fact salvation history is an ever continuing event which can be realized only through an ongoing theological reflection. Here there is a radical difference between proselytism and evangelization. Proselytism is easily discernible in Israel's attitude to the Word of God: Israel had a deep sense of the saving word revealed to it by God, who is the 'wholly Other.' But its religious concept was rather centripetal. Its own understanding of God's word was all that mattered; the *promise* was made to it alone. Others must see the wonders God has worked in Israel and went their way to Jerusalem. Proselytism was practised only to swell Israel's ranks. Christ came to fulfil the expectations of Israel, but he added a new dimension by emphasizing that Israel bore salvation not for herself alone, but for all men, and by

inviting other Jews to be good neighbours to all. Baptism was not a device to swell the ranks of a closed community. The central missionary insight was expressed by Peter at Caesarea when he realized that God tolerated no particularism and that those Gentiles like Cornelius who received the Spirit like the Jewish followers of Christ had equally the right to the waters of Baptism and all the allied privileges.

There is no doubt that at certain times in its history Church evangelization for lack of sufficient theological reflection was conceived very much along the lines of proselytism: the Church was defined as a society. The notes distinguishing her from other societies were elaborately explained, the conditions of membership clearly defined, and the goal of missionary work indicated as the establishment of the Church where it did not exist and its expansion where it already existed. But this approach fails to take note of the basic idea of evangelization: the event, *par excellence*, of encounter with 'the other,' the announcement of the Good News to 'the other' as 'other' in all his otherness. The fundamental basis of evangelization is brotherly love without limits, implying self-renunciation even to the surrender of one's life. This love, proclaimed by Christ is the fulfilment of the Law and of the Prophets. The essence of the Good News is that God's initiative in Jesus Christ enables men to enter His family, that the authentic human family is reconstituted under its new head, and a new order embracing all men is established, and that all children of the one Father must display universal love. Though this Good News is proclaimed first to the Jews, the Chosen People of God, it is destined for all men. Israel's Messiah is the Saviour of the world. The Father's kingdom will not tolerate any particularism. The Jews however, were scandalized by the News that ignored their privileges, and the Samaritans seemed more disposed to acclaim Christ as the Saviour of the world (Jn. 4: 42).

Even the Apostles needed long reflection, each in his own particular line of theology, to arrive at an adequate understanding of their mission. All of them had to go back to the Scriptures and discover there the meaning of the Cross in the Good News they had to announce, in the symbolism of the suffering Servant of the Lord, a prototype of both Christ and of the Chosen



People, who had to express their double love for God and men through the Cross, so that they could be really proud of being persecuted and beaten in the name of Christ. The question of Christ to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus "Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?" (Lk. 24: 25) summarizes the Lucan theology of the Saviour's identification with suffering humanity. For Paul the wisdom of the Cross which is foolishness in the eyes of the Gentiles, is the mature understanding of the mystery of God's plan of salvation for all men. John finds in the heart of Christ opened on the Cross the meaning of Eucharist and Baptism: total offering to God and the inexhaustible outpouring of grace for all men.

Even the extraordinary exhibition of enthusiasm for speaking out on the Gospel on the day of Pentecost did not arise from a feeling that the Christians were a new group distinct from the Jews, but rather from a vivid sense of the presence of the Risen Lord with the disciples and a consequent breaking down of barriers of race and class. Jesus Christ was the secret of the world's salvation, the Lord and Saviour. Hence it was the inner dynamism of the Gospel that called for its proclamation to all men.

There was also the awareness that, with Pentecost, a new order had taken hold of the world. Rather than being a mere human project or undertaking its initiative was from God and the moving principle was the Spirit. The Spirit called Peter to announce the Gospel to Cornelius and his companions at Caesarea. The Spirit chose Paul and Barnabas to preach Christ to the Gentiles. The Spirit decided that the Gentile converts need not be subjected to the ritual laws of Judaism. Hence Christian evangelization was not a five-year or twenty-five year plan to convert the world, but a manifestation of the charism of the Spirit that chooses the messengers. It pleases at the opportune moment to call the nations to God's saving word.

### **Dialogue and evangelization**

Precisely because evangelization is announcing what God has done for all men in history, it has to be dialogical; since by

His action in Christ He is only fulfilling and showing forth what He has been doing in the rest of history and in the traditions of various peoples. Hence dialogue with other men and other traditions is not a mere technique for achieving evangelization but its basic requisite and fundamental structure. Evangelization is not "selling" the Good News, nor is it an appeal to join "us" rather than "them". It is the proclamation of universal brotherly love of all as children of the same family, and of the event, *par excellence*, of encounter with the self-disclosure of God in human history. As Joseph Ratzinger says, Christian belief is not concerned merely with the eternal, which "as the 'quite other' would remain completely outside the human world and time" but rather much more "with God in history, with God as man". It is revelation precisely because it bridges time and eternity.<sup>11</sup> The Christian Gospel is not a matter of merely adding a few more items to the religious creeds, but of discovering together the meaning and impact of the presence of the risen Lord in humanity.

What happened through Jesus of Nazareth in human history is not anyone's personal secret but everyone's right and privilege, in the same way as the authentic religious insights of Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian and other traditions are the common heritage of all men. This sharing of religious experience is the essence of religious dialogue and that is what evangelization is all about. To withhold that experience from others would be as selfish as denying any nation or group of people the benefits of modern scientific discoveries; to refuse to participate in the Good News would be as stupid as ignoring all contemporary technological progress and opting to live in the Stone Age. The religious histories of all nations and traditions are as much under the loving providence of God as Israel's and their positive insights have to be accepted with as much openness as the fact of the entry of the Word of God in human history.

There can be no doubt that the Incarnation of the Logos in Jesus of Nazareth had a decisive effect on human history, and

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11. Joseph Ratzinger S. J. *Introduction to Christianity*, trs J. R. Foster, New York: Herder & Herder, 1970, p. 27.

the community of the disciples of Christ, the Church, as the reconstituted authentic human family "as the active presence of God's salvation in the world" is a necessary means of salvation for all men. But it does not mean that anyone will be saved only in a conscious encounter with the Church. She is not a sanctuary for escape from the world but a sign, a sacrament of salvation offered by God to the whole world. It means that "what God has already effectively begun to bring about in the whole of mankind in activity of grace that is not clearly expressed and recognized as such, is expressed and accomplished more clearly and recognizably as the work of grace in the world in the Church, although this expression and accomplishment, are to some extent always deprived of their lustre because of our human failure".<sup>12</sup> Every religious tradition is, in a sense, the expression and manifestation of the Divine Logos, though it is in the Incarnation that the Logos integrates the human race into his own person. But if Christianity and Judaism emphasize the unity of the human race and the centrality of history, other religious traditions have other valid points to emphasize like the interiority of religious experience in Hinduism and the emptiness and transitoriness of the world in Buddhism. One cannot really claim acceptance of the Gospel sincerely if one rejects these other valid insights at the same time.

The dialogical character of these varying aspects of man's extremely diverse spiritual quest is brought to a new test in the modern age. In the past religious creeds and practices have been sometimes the occasion for exploitation of peoples, and even of religious wars, defeating the very meaning of evangelization, because the community of quest and brotherly love were denied by selfish people who made religion an instrument for personal gain. Today the common quest of humanity and universal brotherhood are not exclusively or even primarily defined by the experience of the sacred or exhausted by past religious history. It is dominated by the common responsibility of constructing a more habitable world for all. This is where the presence of the risen Lord has to be primarily realized and brotherly love effectively asserted.

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12. Edward Schillebeeckx O. P. *The Mission of the Church*, New York: Seabury Press, 1973, p. 46.



Here again appearances are deceptive, and the spirit behind them more important. The American businessman, who has his ware made in Hongkong or Korea or Taiwan, may claim he is providing jobs for the poor in these places, and may in fact, be playing a starvation wage for cheap labour in those parts, draining those countries of their raw materials and depriving hundreds of thousands of poor workers in America of their jobs while amassing billions in profits. Only a dialogical approach to the varied economic, social, cultural and other problems and diverse interests of people everywhere, and an honest search for solutions in the consciousness that all men constitute one family, can lead to solutions consonant with the common responsibility. A missionary effort that aims only at the so-called spiritual good of the people and does not enter into dialogue with the actual concerns of humanity today fails in its primary objective. Similarly those who would isolate these temporal concerns from the basic spiritual or religious quest of man fail in their service of humanity. Man can be taken only in his totality.

### **The theology of dialogue**

The dialogical nature of the Gospel demands that each tradition and thought pattern of faith should initiate an inner dialogue with itself, to examine how its own inner logic has relevance to everchanging actual situations and new facets presented by basic religious problems. Hence, on the one hand, theology, which is the communitarian reflection on faith in the actual situation, is dialogical, and on the other, dialogue between man and man, tradition and tradition, has a certain theological basis in depth. Theology constantly challenges its own suppositions and methods. This is an acute problem in the Indian context since in the past models and modes of theology have been taken over blindly from text-books and manuals written in the European or American contexts. Even in the West, as the recent history of hermeneutics amply testifies, the inner logic of particular traditions has been constantly challenged when one tries to make clear the spiritual message of Paul or John to the contemporary mind, breaking down the resistance of their symbols, myths and idioms, to the modern way of thought. To pretend that their message completely transcended the particularities of individuals and situations is to deny the basic historical structure of the

Incarnation. The different Books of the Bible bear clear testimony to the fact that their different authors entered into dialogue with the concrete situation of the recipients of their message not only regarding the appropriate idioms and symbols but even regarding the details of the message itself, sometimes shifting the emphasis from the temple, law, covenant and exodus ideas of the Palestinian context to the light, life, expiation, wisdom and mystery themes prominent in the consciousness of the Greek world.

In the context of the Indian religious traditions questions have, perhaps, to be more radical: How basic to the Gospel of salvation are the structure of salvation event conceived according to the linear concept of history, and the emphasis on the eschatological process, congenial to the thought pattern of the Mediterranean people? Could not the salvation accomplished once and for all in Jesus of Nazareth be conceived as an ever-abiding and ever-continuing mystery patterned on the dance of the Nataraja or the *lila* of the avatars of Vishnu according to the Indian concept of history? Even the mystery of the Trinity of God finds significant reformulations in the writings of Hindu Reformers like Keshab Chandr Sen and Pratap Sunder Majumdar, with a stress on the experiential aspect.

This dialogical structure of theology is not something merely for interpreting the content of faith, the mysteries disclosed by God in revelation, but something basic to faith itself. It would make theology trivial to conceive of it as something coming after faith like footnotes to a text. Faith, which is the response to divine self-disclosure in history, is itself conceived through reflection, both individual and collective, and hence dialogue with a particular culture and with the attitudes, sentiments and aspirations of those who participate in it is integral to faith itself.

This does not mean that all dialogue, all discourse between man and man, between community and community, between man and his environment, is necessarily theological. That even the Gospel can be preached purely from political, social, cultural or philanthropic motives, with very little emphasis on a real sharing in faith, bears out this point. Dialogue itself, however, is not an impersonal, objective study or discussion of some topic,

but rather the meeting of persons as persons. Their openness to each other is more important than the information they communicate or ideas they exchange. In this sense the Gospel if properly reflected upon will reveal that with the glorification of the humanity of Christ through his resurrection and ascension all that is authentic and positive in humanity is raised to a higher level, so that any true dialogue between men in depth is also a meeting in Christ and God.

### A theology for a dialogue

A theology for dialogue is not any artificial attempt to make the Gospel acceptable to any particular group. It is rather the common search of people sharing in the same cultural situation, of believers and non-believers alike, to discover the meaning and implications of God's word in that situation, to find out how the Logos, as the inner unifying and energizing principle of all creation, transforms the whole situation from within. This is not a blind search or an impersonal process. Believers know that the divine Logos has become the focal point of human history in Jesus of Nazareth and radically transformed it through his victory over sin and death. The so-called non-believers know that the world cannot attain its authentic existence and goal without an incarnation of the Logos in history. The believers proclaim the transformation of history through the concrete, historical humanity of the Logos in their preaching, their worship, their continued reflection of the impact of that 'good news' on the actual situation, and especially by the living witness of their communion in the Word as the Church. This active theological reflection of theirs on the Gospel becomes a theology for dialogue with non-believers when these can find there the echo of their own aspirations.

There was a time in the history of the Church when "*disciplina arcani*", the law of secrecy, was the basic norm for theology. Theology was the interpretation of a mystery reserved for the initiates. This idea of the secret doctrine was emphasized not only by Christians but by almost all the major religions of the world. The parable of the Sower was proposed not only by Christ but before him reportedly by Buddha: Sowing the seed on rocky ground or among thorns does not yield any return. One



should not cast pearls before swine. So Buddha disclosed his full doctrine only to the monks, and Christ reserved to his disciples the plain interpretation of the Kingdom. Today, however, in all religions, the attitude has changed. The concerns of theology belong to all men. Theology and religion have gained a certain prestige even in secular universities. What is right or wrong, salvific or baneful, to Christians is equally so for other men. Hence there is no secret theology for Christians alone today. If there is a God, He is God for the atheists too. If Jesus Christ is the one focal point of human history and the Saviour of all men according to the Christian faith, He is so for the Hindus and Budhists as well, and they have a right to know how Christ affects their lives. Even the non-believer has to stop and ask: "Is it totally irrelevant to me, or does it in some way correspond to what I am looking for? Hence, all theology today is a theology for dialogue.

### Conclusion

Thus the basic theological reason for evangelization is that the Gospel is the Good News for all men. The Christ event which radically transformed human history into a new order of universal salvation calls for universal proclamation. Even the scoffers will have to face up to the answer given by Buber's Rabbi Levi Jizhak to the doubting scholar concerning the Bible: "But perhaps it is true after all!" It is a theology of dialogue not only because it can be communicated to others only in a spirit of give and take towards the various religious traditions of humanity, but particularly because the Gospel is the meeting of men as free persons in Jesus Christ, the Logos. Evangelization is not merely an exchange of ideas or information but the encounter of man with man in Christ and God. All theology today is also theology for dialogue not because it is a technique for communicating the Gospel but because, in the believer's ongoing reflection on their faith, the non-believers meet with what they are looking for in their aspirations: the solutions of the basic problems of man, the one salvation of all humanity.

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# Myth, Religion and Depth Psychology

Almost a Century ago the great anthropologist James C. Frazer, the author of the *Golden Bough* (first edition 1890), advanced the theory that mankind everywhere passes through three stages of intellectual development, from magic to religion and from religion to science (cf. A. Comte's theological, metaphysical and positive phases). He saw the basis of myth in magic – the tendency to control nature by rites and spells. Only when the more intelligent among the early men discovered the limitations of their magical might, did they appeal, in supplication and propitiation, to demons, ancestor-spirits or the gods of religion. In the course of time the shrewder intellects saw that spirits and other higher beings were impotent in certain matters and so science was born. Frazer assumed that with the progress and development of science and technology the crass superstitions of magic and religion would ultimately fade away.<sup>1</sup>

His thought and that of a whole generation of nineteenth century anthropologists (Spencer, Tylor, Lang) was governed by the evolutionary prejudice that the latest in time is the best and the highest. For these men, quite blatantly, intelligence had begun with the Greeks and culminated in Western Europe. Other types of wisdom, different life goals from those of Western man, were regarded as rudimentary forms of modern culture and their worth had to depend on their degree of approximation to modernity.

To this cultural ethnocentrism, allied with the Western belief in the superiority of the scientific point of view, is due another supererogatory assumption, viz., that myths are accounts of psychical history corresponding to the world of gross facts. Mythology, in this view, is a primitive, fumbling effort to explain

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1. Cf. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 27-28; B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1948), pp. 18-19.

the world of nature – a false etiology – and the rituals of early man, only a misguided technology.

Today all serious students of psychology and comparative religion propose that myths are not to be judged as true or false: that they are not reports of historical facts and therefore are not verifiable in any narrowly scientific way. They belong rather to the domain of the facts of mind, i. e. to the science of the psyche. Mythologies, their deities and demons, are projections of a specific quality of the psyche that unfolds itself in terms of symbols. These, in turn, are products of dream which may occur either in the physical condition of sleep or in waking states ("waking dreams"), i. e. in intuitive perceptions of the meaning of life in fantasy activity, etc.<sup>2</sup> All forms and figures of myth can therefore be seen as partaking of the nature of dream. Myths are public dreams; dreams are private myths. "Both dream and myth are aspects of a single dimension of experience, the symbolic dimension."<sup>3</sup>

In order not to throw out the baby with the bath, we must ask whether it is not possible to arrive at such an understanding of the life-supporting nature of myths that in criticizing their archaic features, we do not disqualify their necessity.<sup>4</sup> Or, to situate the problem within the context of depth psychology, let us suggest that all the discredited mythologies of antiquity, far from being just a passing moment in the history of the evolution of consciousness, point to some permanent spiritual legacy which inheres in the very structures of the psyche, and so constitutes a sort of "universal revelation of microcosm".<sup>5</sup>

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2. Cf. C. G. Jung *CW*, VI (Princeton University Press, 1951), par. 743.

3. Ira Progoff, "Waking Dream and Living Myth" *Myths, Dreams and Religion*, ed. by Joseph Campbell (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1970), p. 178.

4. Cf. Joseph Campbell, *Myths to Live By* (Viking Press, 1972), p. 12.

5. Joseph Campbell, *The Flight of the Wild Gander* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1972), p. 130.



### Dreams, myths as archetypes

We first turn to S. Freud's momentous discovery that for man there is a primordial epoch – the earliest childhood which determines the rest of his life. Translated into terms of mythological thought the pre-natal or unconscious state corresponds to "paradise" ending in a "catastrophe" or a "fall" (the infantile trauma) which lays the foundations of the human condition as we know it. Man is now suffering the after-effects of a personal trauma that occurred in the *illud tempus* of childhood. The cure consists in a "return to the past", in re-living the psychic shock and bringing it back to consciousness. From the point of view of archaic thought, man has to repeat his birth, to become contemporary with the "beginning".<sup>6</sup>

Freud's importance lies in the recognition that the mythological and the unconscious realms are identical and that a relationship exists between myth and dream. To him, however, dreams are essentially carriers of repressed infantile incest wishes, i. e. they refer symbolically to those past experiences that the individual is unable to accept by the light of consciousness. This is to say that in Freud's scheme symbols are not regarded as an integral form of human experience, but as secondary and derivative. Myth, magic and religion must therefore be judged negatively – as substitutes or surrogates for unconscious infantile experiences; they are pathological, errors to be refuted and supplanted by science.

It has become increasingly apparent, during the last decades, that Freud's conception of dreams and their content is too narrowly conceived. The first to recognize the problem was C. G. Jung. And let us add, by way of anticipation, that Jung's re-formulation and broadening of the original Freudian insight, provided the groundwork of the most important development in contemporary psychology the emergence of the so-called Humanistic (the Third Force) and Transpersonal (the Fourth Force) psychologies.

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6. Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, trans. by Philip Mairet (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 53 ff.

Jung retained Freud's hypothesis of the unconscious (as a reservoir of repressed and forgotten material), but he also described a deeper level which he called the collective unconscious (the inherently and universally human). This area of the psyche contains dreams, patterns of symbolism and religious images that are not mainly individual but pertain to mankind as a whole; it is the aboriginal, empirically verifiable source of myths and religions. According to Jung, the believer who assumes that religious images are of divine (i. e. extra-human) origin, that they have been revealed to man by some supernatural agency, as well as the skeptic who thinks that they are invented or a result of conscious elaboration, are both wrong. Religious symbols and concepts are in fact "collective representations" which emanate from primeval dreams and collective fantasy. As such, these images are involuntary spontaneous manifestations and by no means intentional inventions.<sup>7</sup>

Jung observed that certain motifs occur in a dream that cannot be explained by anything in the dreamer's personal experiences; these motifs which Freud called "archaic remnants", seem to be aboriginal, inherited shapes of the human mind. Jung gave them the name 'archetypes' or "primordial images" because they are grounded in the human body, its nervous system and brain; they represent the wisdom of the species, the basis of our mind, just as much as the structure of our body is based on the general anatomical pattern of the mammal.<sup>8</sup> Archetypes, however,

7. C. G. Jung, ed., *Man and His Symbols* (New York: Dell Pub. Co., Inc., 1964), pp. 41-42.

8. Jung has shown that these same fundamental patterns still manifest themselves in the dreams and visions of secular men today. The theologians may demythologize religious discourse, but the myths remain in the depths of man's psyche. For example, Bultmann attacks the notion of a 3-storied universe as outmoded, and from a scientific point of view he is correct. Nevertheless, the same man who consciously rejects the idea that heaven is 'up there' may still dream of climbing or flying up to heaven or descending into the fiery depths of hell. Modern man's consciousness bears the impress of a scientific world view, but his unconscious moves in a different dimension. Cf. Jay G. Williams, "Other-worldly Christianity: some positive considerations", *Theology Today*, Oct. 1971, pp. 330-31.

are not be thought of as definite mythological images and motifs; they are rather powers or tendencies to form definite representations (symbols) of a motif. Symbols vary in various parts of the world according to the local flora, fauna, geography, racial features, etc. without losing their basic pattern. No matter how far we go back in time or into what land we venture, we find men living according to certain universally shared myths and symbols. In Jung's words, archetypes are "forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myths and at the same time as autochthonous, individual products of unconscious origin".<sup>9</sup>

In a similar vein Ananda Coomaraswamy, one of the most incisive and learned minds of our time, maintains that the dream like imagery of myth in India is part of a common perennial philosophy of man's nature and destiny—differing from place to place only in terminology and points of emphasis. All mythology, according to Coomaraswamy, involves a corresponding philosophy — "the perennial philosophy", pointing to the spiritual unity of the human race. "It may be really true that... the various cultures of mankind are no more than the dialects of one and the same spiritual language."<sup>10</sup>

Myth to Coomaraswamy is the traditional vehicle of man's profoundest metaphysical insights; it is the penultimate truth, the nearest approach to absolute truth that can be stated in words. Note, however, that "truth" in Coomaraswamy's language refers

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9. C. Jung, *CW*, XI, par. 88. Jung's theory of archetypes is not his own invention. He has borrowed the term 'archetype' from classical sources: Cicero, Pliny, the *Corpus Hermeticus*, Augustine. J. Campbell observes that Adolf Bastian's theory of 'elementary ideas' which is similar to Jung's, corresponds to the *Logoi spermatikoi* of the Stoics and that the tradition of "subjectively known forms" (Skr. *antarjñeyarūpa*) is coextensive with the tradition of myth and provides the key to the understanding of mythological images. Cf *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton University Press, 1968. Bollingen Series XVI), p. 19 note.

10. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Recollection, Indian and Platonic*, Supplement to the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Number 3, April-June 1944, p. 18.



not to an end-result of rational inquiry, but to the most central state of our own being which is variously designated as Wholeness (Jung), Brahman-Atman, Pure Consciousness, the Buddha nature, etc. The role of symbols (which according to Jung are outward manifestations of archetypes) is to express this state by elucidating (a) the stored-up, racially and individually acquired wisdom of mankind; (b) levels of the psyche that are indicative of an individual's future since symbols possess an anticipatory or prognostic aspect revealing the yearnings of mankind for completion, rebirth, harmony, purification and the like.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the anticipatory or guiding function of myth Jung speaks of the compensatory action of dreams and symbols in our psychic development. Dreams often compensate a conscious thought or attitude by calling attention to ignored and repressed aspects of the psyche. On the conscious level we try to avoid such things as disorder, anxiety, darkness, death. Myth (as a public dream and a primitive philosophy) reminds us that the dark side of life, the principle of evil, must be accounted for. It has a sharper intuition of the world's ambivalence than the either/or style of logical thinking. For example, Mircea Eliade has pointed out that at the level of religious folklore among central Asian and European peoples long since converted to Islam and Christianity, there is still the necessity of making a place for the Devil as a companion born of God's desire to come out of his solitude. "What counts for us is that the popular mind has been pleased to imagine the loneliness of God and his comradeship with the Devil, and the Devil's role as God's servant collaborator and even chief counselor; to imagine, moreover, the divine origin of the Devil, for essentially God's spittle is nothing less than divine; to imagine, in fact, a certain 'sympathy' between God and the Devil which cannot fail to remind us of the 'sympathy' between the Creator and Mephistopheles."<sup>12</sup>

11. Cf. Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, p. 66 ff.; p. 97 ff.

12. Mircea Eliade, *Mephistopheles and the Androgyne*, *Studies in Religious Myth and Symbol*, trans. by J. M. Cohen (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), pp. 87-88; cf. pp. 82-124. See also R. S. Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament* (Evanston, Ill.: North-western University Press, 1967), pp. 130-131; Cf. Jung, "Answer to Job", *CW*, XI.

### Myth and the mystic vision

The peripatetic philosopher Alan Watts has defined myth as "a complex of images which gives significance to life as a whole. It dramatizes the order / disorder of the world in such a way as to make disorder relative to order, to give the villain his part and the Devil his due".<sup>13</sup>

Watts goes so far as to say that rejection of the wisdom of myth would imply that we should abandon the whole modern philosophy of process and relativity; it would be tantamount to asserting that, for example, environment is a meaningless idea, that "fields" are empty concepts, etc. Strange, then as it may sound, the devaluation of myth would require a reversal of the main scientific thought today for it appears that the scientist (the physicist, biologist and psychologist) is rediscovering the truth of the ancient Hindu aphorism *tat twam asi* ("You, my dear, Shvetaketu, you are It- *tat twam asi*". *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6. 9-16, c. 8th century B. C.).<sup>14</sup>

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13. Alan W. Watts, *The Two Hands of God, the Myths of Polarity* (Collier Books, 1963), p. 31.

14. It is particularly in the field of psychology that some of the most basic insights of myth and religion are regaining their respectability. An ever growing number of psychologists are engaged in creating a scientific Transpersonal psychology - a Western understanding of the spiritual - dealing with ultimate purposes, with God, cosmic consciousness, peak experiences, transcendence of the self, sacralization of everyday life, etc. Cf. Charles Tart, ed., *Transpersonal Psychologies* (Harper & Row, 1977, pp. 3-7. --- It is now widely recognized that, for example, the religions of India provide materials which show that religion can be studied as a branch of psychology - the latter understood as an integrated science of mind, the soul, and the spirit, not just as a discipline that confines itself to experimentation with a small section of mental phenomena. Cf. Frits Staal, *Exploring Mysticism, a Methodological Essay* (University of California Press, 1975), p. 194-196. --- J. Campbell observes that "the ultimate secret of the appeal of the Orient is that its disciplines are inward-pointing, mystical, and psychological," *Myths to Live By* (Viking Press, 1972), p. 87.

In view of such ruminations Watts predicts that "the basic mythology of the Hindu world... may attain a new dignity". This would follow upon the realization among the zealots of the scientific attitude that "the form of man extends far, far beyond the limits of the skin and very much deeper than the conscious ego".<sup>15</sup>

Pursuing this line of thought we find the great mythologist and mystagogue Joseph Campbell discoursing on the mystical or metaphysical function of myth. Myths, he says, are supposed to awaken in the individual "a sense of awe and gratitude in relation to the mystery dimension of the universe, not so that he lives in fear of it, but so that he recognizes that he participates in it, since *the mystery of being is the mystery of his own deep being as well*"<sup>16</sup> (italics added). *Sila ersinarsinivdulge* - "Be not afraid" said Sila, the soul of the universe, to the Alaskan medicine man Najaqneq.<sup>17</sup> And in the same spirit, the hideous and wrathful figures of Hindu and Buddhist iconography have often one hand in the gesture (*mudra*) of "Fear not". For it seems that the crucial mystery today is not the animal or the plant world, not even the miracle of the heavenly spheres, but man himself - the man who realizes that he is not delivered into this planet by some god, but that he came forth from it. As Campbell rhapsodically puts it: "We are its (the universe's) eyes and mind, its seeing and its thinking. And the earth together with its sun, this light around which it flies like a moth, came forth we are told, from a nebula; and that nebula, in turn from space. So that we are the mind, ultimately, of space. No wonder, then, that its laws and ours are the same! Likewise, our depths are the depths of space, whence all those gods sprang that men's minds in the past projected onto animals and plants, onto hills and streams, the planets in their courses, and their own peculiar social observances."<sup>18</sup>

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15. Watts, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

16. Campbell, *Myths to Live By*, p. 215.

17. Cf. Knud Rasmussen, *Across Arctic America* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), pp. 82-86.

18. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 266.



An excellent illustration of the mystical function of myth is offered in the hero myths which as a matter of course, vary enormously in detail but structurally are very similar. The hero is the mythical prototype of the mystic, i. e. the man or woman who has transcended his personal and historical limitation and has attained the universally valid, unspecific level of existence. One could say, he is the man who has come to his senses by realizing that the essence of oneself and the essence of the world are one. "Where ever the hero may wander, whatever he may do, he is ever in the presence of his own essence"; for him separation or withdrawal from the world is no longer necessary because "he has the perfected eye to see."<sup>19</sup>

The most significant imagery of mythology, while originating in the depths of man's psyche, directs him beyond ego-consciousness (crucifixion and resurrection of the ego). It should not be difficult, therefore, to understand the command of the Zen master to the disciple who wants to be released from the prison of his mask of personality (*persona*): "Show me the face that you had before you were born!"<sup>20</sup> It is the same question that the Hindu guru poses to his adept: "Where are you between two thoughts?"<sup>21</sup>

A peculiar characteristic of *homo mysticus* is that his position at the center of the universal mystery does not transfix him into an unmovable point of reference. Like the hero of the myth, wherever he chances to be, whatever he does, he is always at the center of things, because his soul is coextensive with the world-soul (*anima mundi*). This is not surprising if we remember that the figure of a center (the world axis, the temple, the mountain) that is "everywhere", is an exact counterpart of the 12th century hermetic philosophy from which men like Pascal, Rabelais, Nicholas Cusanus, derived their definition of God as a "circle whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere."

19. Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 386; cf. pp. 19-20.

20. Cf. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*. First Series. Londo Luzac & Co., 1927) pp. 223-228.

21. Cf. Sri Krishna Menon, *Atmanivritti*; (Trivandrum: Vedanta Pub., 1952), p. 16. Par. I.)

To state it in more contemporary terms: modern man, having renounced all the absolutes (absolute supports, life-supporting illusions of literally interpreted myth and religion is faced with the problem of recovering his wholeness. He must find and become reconciled with a center that is not fixed at any particular point of space or time. He is asked to establish himself in the mist of process, of becoming and insecurity – at the still point of a turning wheel.

To the question why the old gods have lost their prestige and their effect on the human soul, we have Jung's answer: because they had served their time and a new mystery began: God became man.<sup>22</sup> In this context Jung has pointed out that whereas in the traditional mandalas the central figure was a god, in the modern mandalas, drawn by his patients, we find a star, a sun, a flower, but never a deity. He concludes that these mandalas are confessions of a particular mental condition that implies no submission to a deity. Stars, crosses, etc., are now symbols for a center in man himself. "And if asked what they mean by this center, they will begin to stammer and to refer to this or that experience which may turn out to be something very similar to the confession of my patient who found that the vision of his world clock had left him with a wonderful feeling of perfect harmony." In summing up these experiences, Jung says: "They came to themselves, they could accept themselves... and thus were reconciled to adverse circumstance and events. This is almost like what used to be expressed by saying: He has made his peace with God, he has sacrificed his own will, he has submitted himself to the will of God."<sup>23</sup>

### Beyond meaning

J. Campbell has observed that mythical images are "antecedent to meaning, though 'meanings' may be read into them".<sup>24</sup> For example, the mythological image of the fall which in the biblical tradition has been interpreted in pseudohistorical terms – as the consequence of a prehistoric act of disobedience, is read

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22. Jung, *CW*, XI, par. 137.

23. *Ibid.*, par. 138.

24. Cf. Campbell, *The Flight of the Wild Gander*, p. 4.

in the East as an effect of our anxieties. The various interpretations of the mythological tree can be outlined in terms of widely differing theologies, sociologies, and psychologies. But the Bo tree, the Holy Rood, and the tree of life at the center of Yahweh's garden, actually are only local inflections of a single mythological archetype. As a tree, a butterfly, the birth of a child, dreams, – archetypes simply *are*, they are “thus come” (Skr. *tathagata*). And, as Campbell remarks, the Buddha is known as “The One Thus come”, the *Tathagata*, because his being transcends any propositional meaning and because “in understanding him as such, we are thrown back on our own sheer ‘suchness’ (*tathatva*), to which words do not reach”.<sup>25</sup>

It is important at this juncture to distinguish between symbols and signs. According to Jung, living symbols originate in the unconscious; they are the most complete expression of that which in any given epoch is as yet unknown and cannot be replaced by any other statement at that time. Signs refer to something everybody knows and in this sense they are only substitutes for, or representations of, the real thing. The “completely unknown”, to which symbols point, are archetypes buried in the collective unconscious. It would be quite wrong, says Jung, to derive symbols from personal sources (for example, from repressed sexuality, as in Freud, where symbol is a disguise for a wish that seeks fulfilment). They correspond to an inherited mode of functioning, to racial engrams (imprints) whose age and origin will be forever hidden to consciousness.<sup>26</sup>

When we are confronted with the mythological and religious images of gods, we should not try to decode them; they are of the order of myth and art and, as such, they can only be re-experienced. The main function of mythology, as of art, in Campbell's words, is “to transport the mind in experience past

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25. Campbell, “Mythological Themes in Creative Literature and Art”. *Myths, Dreams, and Religion*, ed. by J. Campbell (New York: E. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1970), p. 159.

26. Jung, *CW*, VI, par. 405; cf. Calvin S. Hall & Vernon J. Nordby. (*A Primer of Jungian Psychology* (A Mentor Book, 1973), pp. 115–118.



the guardians – desire and fear – of the paradisaal gate to the tree within of illumined life.”<sup>27</sup> Mythological symbolism invites us “beyond both the image of god and the image of man... to find the ultimate ground of all these guiding and protecting, edifying yet imprisoning, names and forms”.<sup>28</sup>

Jung has stated that “the philosophy of the Upanishads corresponds to a psychology that long ago recognized the relativity of the gods.”<sup>29</sup> By this we understand that gods and Buddhas in the East are not external to man nor do they represent final, ultimate reality (like Yahweh or Allah in the West). They rather are pointers to that ineffable state of being, consciousness and bliss that is All in all of us. In the Eastern “religions of identity” the aim of worship is thus “to effect in the devotee a psychological transformation through a shift in his plane of vision from the passing to the enduring, through which he may come finally to realize in experience (not simply as an article of faith) that he is identical with that before which he bows”.<sup>30</sup>

### Myth, mysticism and “peak-experiences” (A. Maslow)

The Jungian use of the words symbol or image brings us to another contemporary attempt to come to terms with the new mandala representing no longer god or gods but the wholeness of man.

As has been implied, images and symbols are psychic facts, products of poetic or mythic fantasy which cannot be formulated more exactly. “To give to imagination interpretative meanings is to think allegorically and to depotentiate the power of imagination.”<sup>31</sup> One such archetypal image which has belonged to the patrimony of the human spirit since Mount Sinai and Mount Olympus, the Mount of Olives and Mount Meru, is that of the peak. “Peaks” have always been associated with spiritual

27. Campbell, “Mythological Themes...”, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

28. Campbell, *The Flight of the Wild Gander*, p. 137.

29. Jung, *CW*, XI, par. 140. Cf. b. VI, pars. 412, 418.

30. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

31. James Hillman, “Peaks and Vales”, *On the Way to Self-Knowledge*, ed. by Jacob Needham and Denis Lewis (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), p. 117. Cf. Jung, *CW*, VI, par. 78.

or pneumatic experience. For example, the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet writes: "The relation of height to spirituality is not merely metaphorical. It is physical reality... I call high and light aspects of my being *spirit* and the dark and heavy aspect *soul*... Spirit is a land of high, white peaks and glittering jewels - like lakes and flowers... People need to climb to the mountain not simply because it is there but because the soulful divinity needs to be mated with the spirit..."<sup>32</sup>

By spiritual experiences we mean essentially mystical experiences or mystical consciousness which must be radically distinguished from ordinary states of consciousness. An ordinary state of consciousness consists of our perception of things, our sense of personal identity, our emotions and our thoughts (these are the sensory-intellectual *contents* of consciousness). Mystical consciousness is neither sensuous nor intellectual; it possesses no sensations, no thoughts or conceptual thinking and is completely emptied of imagined forms and figures (St. John of the Cross). In the Upanishadic mysticism one goes beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, to a state of pure unitary consciousness in which awareness of the world of multiplicity is completely erased. To this end mystics of all religions use techniques to shrink the stream of consciousness by concentration on one single point or object. It does not seem to matter *what* thing you concentrate on, because the overriding "purpose" is to get rid of meaning since meaning is thought, and you have to get rid of thought.<sup>33</sup> In this process one may be able to reach a silent area which is best designated the dwelling place of the spirit, a state of pure consciousness devoid of all thought and words.

Mythical images, to the extent that they simply *are* (there is no question of *what* they are), partake of the realm of spirit or pure consciousness. As Campbell observes, meanings can be read into them, meanings can be read out of them, but in themselves they are antecedent to meaning. Like ourselves, like trees, like peaks, like dreams, they are "thus come" (Skr. *tathagata*).

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32. cited by Hillman, *ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

33. W. T. Stace, *Man Against Darkness* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), p. 23.

One is struck with wonder and awe at the mere existence (that-ness or such-ness or is-ness) of things.<sup>34</sup>

Let us now return to the "peaks." It was A. Maslow (died 1970), the founder of the so called Humanistic psychology (known also as the Third Force, in addition to behavioral sciences and psycho-analysis) who introduced the expression "peak experiences" in a new psychology. Maslow's importance lies in the fact that he has chosen to treat the personal illuminations or revelations of the great religious personages — seers, prophets — as perfectly natural human peak experiences.<sup>35</sup> Because they are in the natural, observable world of phenomena, we can investigate them empirically, and as our knowledge of them is growing, we may now hope to understand more about the allegedly supernatural revelations upon which the high religions were founded.<sup>36</sup>

This is a daring and grandiose project. It means that Maslow et al., by focusing on peak experiences, resonate the

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34. Cf. L. Wiigenstein's famous remark that the mystical is the existence of the world: "Not *how* the world is but *that* it is, is mystical" (*Tractatus*, 6. 44). In the words of Hakuin (1685–1768), founder of the Rinzai School of Zen: "Niravana itself is before you, / Where you stand is the Land of Purity" *The Song of Zazen*, quoted in Zenkai Shibayama, *A Flower Does not Talk*. Tokyo, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1970, p. 67.).

35. Maslow's endeavour can be seen as part of a larger trend in psychology to develop a new image of man (W. Rogers, K. Goldstein, G. Allport). Already the Third Force has branched out into the so-called Transpersonal Psychology which goes beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization and centers itself in the cosmos. There is a growing realization among psychologists that "without the transcendent and the transpersonal, we get sick, violent, and nihilistic, or else hopeless and apathetic. We need something 'bigger than we are', to be awed by and to commit ourselves to, in a new, naturalistic, empirical, non-churchly sense..." A. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (D. Van Nostrand, 1968), p. iv

36. Cf. Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* (Penguin Books, 1976), p. 27.



archetypal image of the peak and thus reintroduce "spirit" and "pure consciousness" (also the Jungian "wholeness") in the realm of psychological science. Science, of course, if it is to deal successfully with the realm of the spirit, must adopt and develop new approaches and new attitudes. In other words, what is at stake here is the concept of meaning itself.

Maslow, in fact, speaks of two different kinds of meaning: "abstractness meaning" and "suchness meaning". The one is of the ambit of classifications, abstractions; the other is of the experimental sphere. Philosopher and scientists generally attempt to integrate, classify and organize the chaotic and multiple world of the meaningless many. Such an organizing activity implies that things (reality, nature, cosmos) having no intrinsic meaning must be given a meaning by man or some god. Another way of dealing with reality is by returning to the sheer experience which is the matrix of all thought and conceptualization. While in the former case it is the organizer - the scientist, the philosopher - who imposes the meaning upon the "raw data", here the ultimate meaning of "facts" is seen as residing in their own being, in their "suchness". If we ask, for example, what is the meaning of a leaf, a painting, a flower, or a person, we answer that they are self-explanatory, they "mean" themselves. Many modern painters and poets reject the demand that their works should "mean" something beyond themselves or that they have a message or a reference to something else.<sup>37</sup>

This approach, which Maslow calls "Taoistic", consists in the ability to listen, to be patient, to suspend action and be receptive and passive without classifying, evaluating, approving or disapproving. "About the only thing you can do when you are passively receptive and accepting is to wonder at it all, contem-

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37. T. S. Eliot, when asked, "Please, Sir, what do you mean by the line 'Lady, three white leopards sat under the juniper tree'?" replied: 'I mean, 'Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper tree'...' Stephen Spender, "Remembering Eliot", *Encounter*, XXIV. April 1965, 4.

plate it, savor it, marvel at it, be fascinated with it – hopefully, enjoy it. That is, the thing to do is to do nothing.”<sup>38</sup>

All these approaches aim at the perception of the suchness and “realness” of things. Another word for it is “contemplation” – a form of nonactive, noninterfering witnessing and savoring which can be likened to Taoistic receptivity to experience. Maslow is convinced that this attitude, which he sometimes calls B-cognition, (cognition of being) provides a path to more reliable and more veridical cognition of reality.<sup>39</sup>

To the extent that B-cognition (or holistic perception) is the cognition of an object in its own right and in its own being, it represents “the purest and most efficient kind of perception of reality”... , because it is “most detached,... least contaminated by the wishes, fears, and needs of the perceiver. It is non-interfering nondemanding, most accepting. In B-cognition dichotomies tend to fuse, categorizing tends to disappear, and the percept is seen as unique.”<sup>40</sup>

Maslow’s “Taoistic receptivity” is similar to what Krishna-murti calls “choiceless awareness” – a state of attention without words, experiencing of what is, without naming. This new state of being, freed from conditioned habits of perception and cognition, from envy, ambition and the desire for power, is equivalent to living in an eternal present. According to Maslow, at this level “the person is godlike” because most gods have been considered to have no needs or wants or deficiencies, nothing lacking, to be gratified in all things.”<sup>41</sup>

Maslow’s psychology is a generalization, in a single description, of some of the basic cognitive moments that are found in unselfish love, in mystical or nature experience, in

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38. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science, a Reconnaissance* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1966), pp. 99-100.

39. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 101.

40. Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (Penguin Books, 1976), p. 160.

41. Cf. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Second Edition (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1968), p. 158 ff.

aesthetic perception, etc. These moments of highest happiness and fulfilment Maslow calls "peak-experiences" – a "splendidly naturalistic idiom, hospitable to all similar meanings in the vocabularies of religion and mysticism, yet confined to none of them".<sup>42</sup>

The most important characteristic of peak experiences seems to be "unitive consciousness" in which the whole universe seen as all of a piece. It can also be described as a perception of the sacred in and through the particular instance of the momentary and the secular; or again, as "the merging of the subject and object, involving no loss of subjectivity but what seems its infinite extension... It is individuality freed of isolation."<sup>43</sup>

In Maslow's opinion, such experiences provide an empirical ground for the traditional ideas of transcendence, heaven, etc., because peak experiences are described in the main, identically by religious people and by people who do not consider themselves religious. Moreover, the characteristics of world-perceived peak-experiences are quite similar to what people, through the ages, have called eternal verities or spiritual values or religious values.<sup>44</sup> To the extent, therefore, that these moments of self-fulfilment are excursions into the ontological realm, their phenomenological descriptions would overlap with the subject matter of philosophy and religion.

However, since most peak-experiences tend to be poignant, emotional and climactic, they often have little to do with the growth of the individual. As Maslow graphically puts it: "... if you witness heaven in a peak experience, why the hell isn't everybody getting better all the time? We should soon turn into a race of angels."<sup>45</sup> In contrast to these dramatic perceptions of

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42. Henry Geiger, "Introduction to A. Maslow" *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. xvi.

43. *Ibid.* p. xvii.

44. Cf. Maslow, *Toward a psychology of Being*, p. 83, 158 ff.

45. Stanley Kirppner, "The Plateau Experience: A. H. Maslow and Others" *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Number 2, 1977, p. 115.



undifferentiated unity, Maslow in his later work identified so-called "plateau experiences" which are characterized by a serene and contemplative living at a constantly higher illumined or awakened level. Above all, plateau experiences represent a witnessing of reality. They involve "seeing the symbolic, or the mythic, the poetic, the transcendent, the miraculous... all of which I think are part of the real world instead of existing only in the eyes of the beholder."<sup>46</sup> It is a witnessing of something that is simply there, of the sheer being of things rather than an immersion in, and attachment to one's own wondrous psychic states. Plateau experience is life at the level of Being.

Maslow believes that the peak and plateau experiences (or experience of such values as wholeness, simplicity, truth, beauty, effortlessness, playfulness, self-sufficiency) can be dissociated, for the purposes of investigation, from any supernatural reference and expressed in an empirically meaningful way, i. e. they can be phrased in a testable way.<sup>47</sup> But it is also possible to see peak experiences as religious or spiritual experiences – whether theist or nontheist, Eastern or Western – if we redefine these terms in such a way that they no longer connote their conventional, superstitious and institutional accretions of meaning.

Maslow dissents, on the one hand, from the followers of the prophets and founders who claimed direct supernatural revelation from God; on the other, from a narrow scientism which refuses to recognize the possibility of transcendent experiences. To him peak and plateau experiences are valid psychologic events worthy of scientific study. More importantly, the fact that they are characteristic of mankind in general or rather of man at his best indicates that man's higher nature is part of his essence. "Man demonstrates in his own nature a pressure towards fuller and fuller Being, more and more perfect actualization of his humanness in exactly the same naturalistic, scientific sense that an acorn may be said to be 'pressing towards' being an oak tree,

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46. *Ibid.*

47. Cf. Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (Penguin Books, 1976), p. 328; cf. *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*, p. 28.

or that a tiger can be observer to 'push towards' being tigerish, or a horse towards being equine.<sup>48</sup>

In this view such purely religious or mythical concepts as, for example, Heaven and Hell, the eternal, the sacred, are neither hallucinations, illusions nor delusions, nor are they extrahuman, supernatural revelations. They do have a reference in the real world. But then, of course, we are faced with a terrible semantic confusion since all the concepts which have been traditionally religious would now have to be redefined and used in a very different way. For example, if we define the word "God" as "Being itself" or as "the integrating principle of the universe" or as "the meaningfulness of the cosmos" then, asks Maslow, what will atheists be fighting against? For in fact most leading theologians and sophisticated people in general define their God, not as a person, but as a force, a principle, an integrating power that expresses the unity and the dimension of depth of the whole of being. At the same time scientists are increasingly abandoning the notion of the cosmos as a machine or as a congeries of atoms that clash blindly, having no relation to each other except push and pull. Religionists and scientists seem to be converging, in their concepts of the universe as 'organismic', as having some kind of unity and integration, as growing and evolving and having direction and therefore some kind of 'meaning'.<sup>49</sup>

All this represents a new situation in the history of religion, a situation in which, to use Maslow's example, a serious Buddhist who is concerned with Tillich's 'dimension of depth' is more co-religionist to a 'serious' agnostic than he is to a conventional, superficial Buddhist for whom religion is only habit or custom.<sup>50</sup>

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It has been said that the root cause of the decay of religious faith has not been any particular discovery of science but

48. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 160; cf. p. 153 ff.; *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, pp. 313-314.

49. Maslow, *Religions, Values and Peak Experiences*, pp. 45-

46. Cf. F. Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Shambala, 1975).

50. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

rather the general spirit of science which has produced a picture of the world that is purposeless, senseless, meaningless. Nature in this view is "merely the hurrying of material, endlessly meaninglessly" (A. Whitehead). Religion could survive the discoveries that the sun, not the earth, is the center of the planetary system; that men are descended from simian ancestors, etc., because these discoveries do not affect "the essence of religious belief itself, which is faith that there is a plan and purpose in the world, that the world is a moral order, that in the end all things are for the best ... Religion can get on with any sort of astronomy, geology, biology, physics. But it cannot get on with a purposeless and meaningless universe".<sup>51</sup>

Perhaps, then, in this time of suspense the experience of "a plan and purpose in the world" should be sought beyond 'meaning' that can be named, in Maslow's "suchness meaning" which, as we saw is the same type of experience that is found in myth and mystical religion. For the mystic, like the mythical hero, has the "innocent eye" (Herbert Read) of the child, not because he is ignorant, but rather because he possesses the "second naivete" of the wise, the "unitive consciousness", viz. the ability "to see the universal in and through the particular, and the eternal in and through the temporal and momentary".<sup>52</sup> Mystical literature is replete with descriptions of the vividness and particularity of the concrete object and at the same time, its eternal, sacred, symbolic quality.

Mircea Eliade has shown that the archaic man too is anxious to live in the sacred wild of myth, because for him the sacred is equivalent to power and in the last analysis to reality. The sacred in archaic societies is not an attribute of deity but rather a dimension of man's consciousness which is fully at home in the cosmos. For example, the rituals of the periodic regeneration of time (cosmogonic myths) are not a simple unthinking imitation of nature. Nature repeats itself, each new spring is the same eternal spring. For the archaic man the rhythms of nature point beyond themselves, beyond their apparent

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51. Stace, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

52. Maslow, *The Frather Reaches of Human Nature*, p. 111.



muteness and opacity. A life immersed in nature acquires an additional dimension: one is able to live – as a historical being – in eternity, “to achieve an ideal form (the archetype) in the very framework of human existence, to be in time without reaping its disadvantages . . .” That is indeed the grand nostalgia of *homo religiosus*, longing for a “concrete paradise” and believing that such a paradise can be won “here, on earth, and *now*, in the present moment”.<sup>53</sup> What we can learn, then, from mythology, from mystical literature and now also from the unobtrusive ponderings of the Transpersonal psychology, is not anything grandiose or exciting in the ordinary sense. It is a certainty, and no longer hope, that the spiritual and the sacred is in the midst of the everydayness of profane life or, as Zen Buddhism would say, in nothing special.

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53. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. by Rosemary Sheed (New York: The World Pub. Co., 1958), p. 408.

# The Buddhist Missionary Movement

## Gautama, the missionary

Delivering his first discourse at Sarnath, near Banaras, to a small group of five men, Gautama the Buddha, in the first half of the sixth century B. C., inaugurated the first missionary movement in the world. This statement makes a distinction between a missionary and a prophet. While the latter addresses members of his own community, the former addresses people not belonging to his community. A prophet is concerned primarily about his own people, while a missionary is all concerned for winning people over to his convictions... There have been prophetic movements even before Gautama, but not any missionary ones. For example, the Hebrew prophets appeared reminding their own people of the latter's identity as the chosen people of God, and Zarathustra, the prophet of Iran called his own people from the worship of many gods to the worship of one 'wise God'. But Gautama appeared in a different role. He wanted to found a new society rather than reform the existing one. He wanted to set in notion a totally new regime rather than innovate the old one. Therefore, his first sermon, mentioned above, is aptly described as 'setting in motion of the wheel of dharma'.<sup>1</sup> He was inviting people of all castes and cultures to join forces with him in building a new community based on a new vision of life. He was opening a missionary movement directed to all men.

Even so, one might very well object to calling Gautama a missionary in the literal sense of that term as 'one sent by another'. Gautama did not claim to have been sent by anybody, still less by any superior Being. Christ claimed to be a missionary on the ground that he was sent by the Father. But Gautama started his mission of his own accord and on his own authority for all practical purposes. "For all practical purposes" because, on a theoretical level, it can be argued that Gautama was the messenger of a transcendental principle which he called Dharma.

However, no amount of research can show that he represented a personal Being. Instead, he acted on his own and communicated a message of his own. All the same he did not lack the sense of urgency that is characteristic of the missionary. St. Paul, for example, felt urged by the love of Christ, and that was all the motive of his missionary endeavour. Similarly, Gautama had the experience of *dharma* which urged him to launch a missionary movement on its behalf. He had the confidence, too, like any other missionary, that the message he carried, was really salvific, and that its acceptance alone would liberate mankind. It is said that he was first uncertain whether the *dharma* he had discovered could ever be communicated to others. He found mankind so intent on its attachments and so engrossed in sensual pleasures that he thought his message would be too deep for it to perceive, too difficult to see, and too hard to understand. Hence, as the tradition has it, he had nearly decided against attempting to convey his experience to the world. Then Brahma is said to have appeared to Gautama pleading with him to teach the new doctrine to mankind. Brahma is said to have argued that if Gautama refrained from teaching his doctrine, the whole world would be lost. This legend should be considered an invention of Buddha's disciples who thereby tried to claim a superiority for the new wisdom over brahmanic teaching. But it indicates Buddha's conviction that he possessed an insight which alone could save the world and the sense of urgency with which he preached his doctrine.

What is more, Gautama spoke with the authority and force of a truth bearer. It was said about Christ that he taught not like the scribes but as one having authority. A similar claim for authority was evident in the way Gautama approached his first audience at Sarnath. He almost demanded to be heard, and forced his message on his hearers. The audience consisted of the five monks who had long left Gautama accusing him of going lax in his ascetical practices. Now seeing the same Gautama coming back to them, they naturally did not feel like taking notice of him, still less of listening to him. Instead they were resolved to treat him with scorn. But as he came closer they could not resist the force of his 'awakened' personality so that as if prompted by an inner voice they greeted him and showed him all the signs of respect due to a fellow monk. They addressed



him by name and by the title 'friend'. But to their surprise, Gautama protested at this point. He refused to be called a friend and treated as a fellow monk. He said, "Monks, you should not any more call me by my name, nor treat me like a friend, for I am now an *arhat*, a *tathagata*, a fully enlightened one. I shall teach you the *dharma*. If you accept it, you too will attain enlightenment." The monks found it difficult to believe that Gautama, whom they knew to have been leading a very relaxed form of ascetical life, had attained enlightenment. Nevertheless they could not fail to note the confidence with which he preached, and they accepted his teaching.

Buddha's show of authority and absolute confidence in his enlightenment bordering on boastfulness may seem uncharacteristic of a sage. But his appeal to the authority of the realized Word must be seen against the background of the absolute authority of Brahmins in Hinduism. Gautama started by organizing his disciples as a challenge to the caste society of the Hindus, but he presently expanded his missionary enterprise beyond all limitations of caste and class and carried it out in an amazingly efficient manner. He showed himself to be a charismatic teacher and an efficient organizer. His message was addressed first to the most influential elements in society. After the five brahmin monks, his first convert was Yasa, son of the richest man in Banaras, next Yasa's parents and rich friends, and then fifty influential citizens of Banaras. Once Buddha was able to establish his disciples as a significant group in the city of Banaras, the most prestigious centre of learning and worship at that time, he sent missionaries to various parts of the country to preach the *dharma*. He instructed them to travel from place to place spreading the new doctrine both by word and example "for the sake of the peace and happiness of the world". They were asked to go not in groups but individually so as to reach as many people as possible.

Buddha himself turned to the elite of society, and went to Rajagriha, the capital city of Magadha, on the way converting thirty young couples. In Rajagriha he converted the king Bimbisara and three influential teachers Mahakasyapa, Sudatta and Sariputra along with their students numbering about two hundred and fifty. The conversion of three Kasyapa brothers who were brahmin

teachers each with a large number of disciples was considered spectacular. First the eldest of them, Uruvela Kasyapa along with his five hundred disciples accepted Gautama's teachings. He was followed by Nadi and Gaya his brothers and their bands of disciples. In a short time Buddhism became so strong in the capital city that during Buddha's lifetime there arose eighteen large Buddhist monasteries in Rajagriha.

From Rajagriha Gautama moved on to Sravasti, the capital of Kosala. Sravasti was then the most important city of the Gangetic plain, commercially and politically. It was there that Gautama, with the help of Sudath, known for his generosity, founded the first *vihāra* of his Order. Sravasti virtually became the headquarters of the new community. In the meantime he kept visiting his home city, Kapilavastu, where he converted many from the Sakya clan including his father Siddhodana, his wife Yasodhara, his cousins Ananda, Anuruddha and Devadatta, his son Rahula and the latter's half-brother Nanda. Gautama also admitted to the company of his followers people from the lower circles of society, like Upali, who joined him at Kapilavastu.

In short, within less than half a century Buddhism was well established in central India, with thousands of members coming from all walks of life and different social strata. One may ask what were the factors responsible for the growth of Buddhism at such a rapid pace. There seem to have been, in the main, three: (1) political patronage, (2) the liberating force of Buddhism, and (3) the novelty of the Buddhist approach to life problems.

### Political patronage

Gautama's intimate connections with royal families and rich merchants of that time definitely played a very crucial role in the spread of his teaching in so short a period. Coming as he did from a noble or probably a royal family he had easy access to the higher social circles. It should be noted that his public life as a missionary was confined to some of the big cities of those times: Banaras, Rajagriha, Sravasti and Kapilavastu. The first Buddhist community was established in Banaras, the intellectual and religious metropolis of northern India. In

Rajagriha Gautama received the patronage of king Bimbisara, who ever after remained his firm supporter and friend. Many of Gautama's discourses are connected with that capital city. It was at Sravasti, the capital of Kosala, that he spent most of his missionary life, and he made it the headquarters of his Order. He is said to have delivered about 1300 of his discourses there. Various sources indicate that Buddhism was established also in Saketa, Vaisali, Kosambi and Ujjain, all of them cities situated along the middle reach of the river Ganges.

That Gautama found many supporters from the merchant community of his time was still another factor that made for the rapid spread of his teaching. For example it was in large part due to the efforts of the rich merchant Sudatta that Buddhism got a good start in Sravasti. A native of Sravasti he met Gautama at Rajagriha and while returning home helped him construct Jatavana monastery, the first of the Buddhist viharas. Purna was another wealthy merchant who embraced Buddhism. He was from Western India and came to know Buddhism through some of his fellow merchants who had already accepted the new religion. Once a Buddhist he dedicated himself to the spreading of the new wisdom. As a businessman he knew how to read the minds of the people and how to make his sermons suit his audience. On account of the great impression he made on the hearers he was acclaimed "the foremost in oratory and preaching". What attracted the merchants most to Buddhism was perhaps the greater freedom of movement it permitted among classes and religions.

### **The liberating force of Buddhism**

It is generally agreed that Buddhism arose as a popular reaction to Brahmanism which, instead of encouraging the personal religious life of individuals, had become an oppressive institution. For the generality of men brahminical Hinduism meant nothing but an elaborate system of sacrifice and allied ritual, which involved no personal commitment but only financial investment, too burdensome for the ordinary worshipper, and too dogmatic, with no place for logic and personal reflection as far as the intellectuals were concerned. Hence it was natural that Gautama who came forward challenging the value of rites and ceremonies and the superiority of the brahminical caste was



accorded a prompt welcome by the people. About the Brahmin claim to superiority over others by reason of the nobility of caste Gautama said: "No brahmin is such by birth; no outcaste is such by birth. An outcaste is such by deeds; a brahmin is such by his deeds." Gautama admitted to his samgha people from all castes and walks of life, and treated them all on an equal footing. Similarly he severely criticised the brahminic sacrifices on economic, social and moral grounds. He would not subscribe to the traditional faith in the efficacy of sacrifice. In the place of the expensive brahminic sacrifices he suggested other simpler and more meaningful forms of sacrifice such as acts of charity, mercy and self-control. This new way of looking at class distinctions and religious acts must have impressed the people at large, and that accounts greatly for the wide acceptance of Buddhism in a short time from its beginning. To the ordinary people it appeared as a liberating movement to which they had been looking forward.

### The novelty of approach to the problems

Another decisive factor in the spread of Buddhism was the novelty of Gautama's approach to problems of life. In the first place his was a teaching that carefully dismissed the exaggerations and abuses of Brahminism, namely its over-emphasis on ritualism and exaggerated claim for priestly superiority. This point has already been mentioned. There are two other aspects of the Buddhist approach worth considering: its secularity and universality. If religion essentially includes explicit reference to a personal God, Buddhism is none, nor did Gautama claim to suggest an alternative to the Brahminic religion. He was all concern for the problem of suffering, and the solution he advocated for it was not in the least religious in the traditional sense, but principally psychological and experimental. For Gautama "restlessness" was the basic misery of *samsāra* and "restfulness" was the characteristic mark of *nirvāna*. He does not seem to have thought that the move from *samsāra* to *nirvāna* could be facilitated by recourse to a personal God. However, by distinguishing *samsāra* and *nirvāna* as temporal and transtemporal realms of existence, Gautama did keep his teaching open to religious interpretations and metaphysical speculations. Thus Buddhism was secular in approach, and for that very reason universal in the sense that everybody

irrespective of his religious convictions, was able to benefit from the treatment it offered for the human *malaise*. This secularity and openness of Buddhism won for it many sympathizers from all classes of the society.

### **Buddhist missionary effort after Gautama**

As explained above Gautama's missionary success was mainly due to royal patronage, the liberating force of his teaching, and the secular and universal appeal of his approach. In later times too, whenever there was a real Buddhist missionary movement, one or other of these factors was at work. To substantiate this statement here are three typical instances from the later history of the Buddhist missionary movement:

The biggest missionary expansion after the time of Gautama took place under the emperor Ashoka, whose reign began in 270 B. C. Particularly bent on promoting peace and moral discipline among his subjects Ashoka found the Buddhist principles of non-violence and compassion most appealing. He seems to have been more interested in Buddhist principles than in Buddhism itself. He wanted to be first of all an ideal king, not a Buddhist monk. He favoured Buddhism because he knew that it would make him a better king, and his subjects happy and peace-loving. He turned out to be a staunch supporter of Buddhist missionaries. He convened the third Buddhist council at Pataliputra, which determined the Pali canon of the scripture. The same council also decided to send missionaries to other countries. From then on Ashoka started on his *Dharmavijaya*, 'conquest through morality', by sending Buddhist missionaries to various countries. The most important of such missions was the one to Sri Lanka, led by Mahindra, Ashoka's son. The king of Sri Lanka, Devanampiya Tissa, welcomed the missionaries and himself adopted Buddhism. Ever since Buddhism has remained the strongest religion of that island. Ashoka sent missionaries to the West as far as Macedonia, Syria and Cyrene, and to the East as far as Malaya and Sumatra.

Coming to the contemporary period we find that the Buddhist missionary ideal is very much alive today. A typical example of mass conversion to Buddhism was the one led by Dr.

Ambedkar beginning in 1935. This was the year when, at the Yeola Conference, the 'Untouchables' under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar, resolved to leave Hinduism and to join some other religion which would give them social and religious equality. In accordance with that resolution in 1956 Ambedkar publicly accepted Buddhism at a ceremony held at Nagpur, and since then at least three and a half million 'untouchables' have followed him. What made Ambedkar and his followers choose Buddhism rather than any other religion? The Yeola Conference which decided that the 'untouchables' should quit Hinduism did not specify which particular religion they should eventually accept in its place. It was clear that what Ambedkar and his followers were searching for, for more than twenty years was freedom the oppressive structures of Hinduism. It was the liberating character of Gautama's teachings that appealed to them. Pandit Jawharlal Nehru once remarked: "Buddhism was a revolt against caste, priestcraft and ritualism."

A third example is the present day enthusiasm for Buddhist way of life in Western countries, in Europe and America. Satiated with material affluence people are looking towards Buddhism both as a liberating ideology and special way of life for gaining spiritual peace and liberation from the rat race for material goods. The Buddhist method of meditation is increasingly becoming popular among youth. Recently Buddhism has also caught the attention of great many scholars engaged in research into the religious experience of mankind. In short, Buddhism seems to be playing a decisive role in shaping world culture of today. What appeals particularly to the modern mind in Buddhism is its practical and universal approach to the human situation. Buddhism was and is missionary by the crucial message it carries to all humanity struggling for liberation.

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# Communion and Development

## Focal points of the Indian theology of Evangelization

1. Indian theology is still in the process of development. The major thoughts and trends in it have yet to crystalize out. In the following pages an attempt is made to understand the converging points of the Indian theology of evangelization. Within a limited scope it is not possible to go into the details of any particular author or school of thought. At most only some broad references can be made to them.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to get at the full import of this essay without at least a general knowledge of the leading currents of thought in Indian theology.

Indian theology is characterised, in the main, by its endeavour to come to grips with two situations: the richness of the religious experience in other religions and the struggle of the Indian nation for a fuller human life. The more Indian theology seeks to respond to these situations in its own characteristic way, the more it tends to be directly preoccupied with life as such, its sharing and transmission and the less with structures and channels created for them. This direct pre-occupation with life and its sharing seems to possess two dimensions, one vertical, the other horizontal. *The first consists in sharing one's experience of God in Christ with others and also in being enriched by others' experience of the ultimate values in the context of a dialogue. The other dimension consists in collaborating with others for the common end of realizing the new humanity, a new social order or, in other words, development in a total sense.*

2. (1) The first dimension is to be seen mainly concretized in relation to the richness of the religious experience in other

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1. There are already several books giving a general introduction to Indian theology. For example, Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, C. L. S. Madras, 1969; Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, C. L. S. 1969 etc.

religions such as Hinduism. In this context evangelization tends to be an endeavour for communion with the adherents of other religions. Indian theology seems to be more and more drawn towards communion with them through dialogue. It is not the darkness in other religions which constrains one to take up the task of evangelization, but, on the contrary, the presence of the Light. It is not so much the absence of life in other religions that urges one to evangelization but the inter-relatedness of the Christian faith with the other religions through Christ the Life, and, hence the possibility of mutual communion and enrichment. This trend in Indian theology has been sufficiently dealt with in a study of such authors as Paul Devanandan and R. Panikkar and in the common Declarations of recently conducted All-India Church Seminars and theological conferences<sup>2</sup>.

2. (2) The second dimension is to be seen mainly realized in the context of the struggle of the Indian nation for a more dignified human life. Evangelization tends here to be understood as an endeavour directed at the total development of man and society. It is in this context that M. M. Thomas and D. S. Amalorpavadass see, in the cultural, social and economic development, "part of the enduring action of the life-giving Christ"<sup>3</sup> and his liberating action in the frustrating situations of our country<sup>4</sup>. Collective thinking sees, in the involvement in national reconstruction, an essential function of evangelization today, and

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2. Cf. P. Devanandan, *Christian concern in Hinduism*, Bangalore, 1961; R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, London, 1964; *All India Seminar on Church in India Today*, CBCI Centre, New Delhi, 1969; Pathrapankal J. (ed.), *Service and Salvation*, Bangalore 1973 pp. 1-16 (Declaration of the All India theological Seminar in Nagpur).

3. M. M. Thomas as quoted by Trutz Rendtorf, from Philip Land (ed.), *Theology meets Progress*, Rome 1971, p. 99; Cf. D. S. Amalorpavadass, *Theology of Development*, Bangalore 1972, p. 14.

4. This is based on the results of an Interview conducted among 80 missionaries from all over India by the present author. The results are given in the book, *Evangelization and Diakonia*, a study in the Indian perspective, to be published shortly in the Dharmaram Publication series.

the missionaries see in development one of the foremost ends of evangelization<sup>5</sup>.

2. (3) There is a strong tendency to hold that the first dimension is to be actualized through the second, i. e., in the context of national reconstruction. The communion of the adherents of different faiths and ideologies seems, under present circumstances, to be possible and genuine and to make sense especially when it is directed to the struggles of the people for a better life<sup>6</sup> and when it is concretized in the New Humanity or New Creation.

This is in short, what a tentative analysis of the leading trends will yield as the most important in the Indian theology of evangelization.

### 3. The purpose of evangelization: communion and development

What according to the evolving theology in India is the purpose of evangelization? The answer expected here is not a general one for the universal church or for the Indian church for all time to come. It is one which the local church in India wants in relation to her task of evangelization in the present phase of her history. If we keep in mind the pre-occupation of Indian theology with Life as such, and its sharing and transmission as the focal points of this concern, the answer will be communion and development. The communion meant here is of the kind whose decisive content is Christ and a development that aims at the total man including his spiritual and religious dimension.

#### 3 (1) The purpose of evangelization seen as communion

In the entire Indian thinking, whether of the theologians or of the common Declarations or of the missionaries, we see, in general, a great appreciation of other religions together with a recognition of the possibility of, and readiness for, closer understanding and communion with them. In this connection let us

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5. Cf. J. B. Chethimattam, *Dialogue in the Indian tradition*, Bangalore 1969, p. 94.

6. Cf. P. Devanandan, *Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual*, Bangalore 1969, p. 23.

recall what Paul Devanandan meant by objective redemption<sup>7</sup>, or what M. M. Thomas understood by the possibility of a Christ-centred fellowship, outside the Church<sup>8</sup>, or what R. Panikkar conveyed through the unknown Christ of Hinduism.<sup>9</sup> We see the recognition of Christ's presence outside the institutional structure of the Church and equally emphasized also in the collective thinking of the Church. It is plain from all the most important documents which enshrine the collective thinking of the Church, such as the findings of the national consultation on the mission of the Church in contemporary India,<sup>10</sup> the Declarations of the All-India Seminar, the Nagpur theological conference, the Patna consultation, and the CBCI Calcutta 1974.

The readiness for, and the possibility of, sharing the experience of ultimate values are due to the recognition of Christ's presence in other religions and in the struggles of the people, and that this leads Christians to a deeper communion with others in the context of a dialogue for mutual enrichment. If the highest end of dialogue is communion either through a sharing of religious experience<sup>11</sup> or through co-operation in works of development<sup>12</sup>, and if Indian theology finds that the proper context of evangelization today is dialogue, then it is to be concluded that the end of evangelization is to be understood as communion—a communion by which “we can share both what is common and what is different”,<sup>13</sup> Here the Indian theology of evangelization is clearly convinced of the genuineness of other religions and envisages a communion at the deepest level of existence with

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7. Cf. M. M. Thomas *Salvation and Humanization*, Madras, 1971.

8. Cf. D. Reetz. “Raymond Panikkar’s theology of religions” *Religion and Society*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, p. 49.

9. Cf. Findings of the national consultation of the mission of the Church in contemporary India, Nagpur 1960, p. 24.

10. Cf. “Workshop report on Dialogue”. *All India Seminar on the Church in India Today* op. cit., p. 341.

11. *ibid*

12. *ibid*

13. Cf. for example, The study of the workshop, “Dynamics of the Growth of God’s people according to the Bible”, *Evangelization and Dialogue in India*, Alwaye 1971.



their adherents who are outside the visible structure of the Church. It is not meant here that Indian theology denies the ecclesial dimension of the end of evangelization. But it is emphasized that the preoccupation of Indian theology with life as such, and its sharing is clear in this context. Attention is first drawn to the possibility and actuality of the communion between men of different faiths and this seems to be the focal point for the present and not its orientation to or culmination in the ecclesial structure as presently understood. While the importance and the necessity of the latter are in general not minimized or denied, the recognition of the possibility and actuality of communion with the adherents of other faiths may lead to rethinking on the present structure of the Church.

### 3. (2) The purpose of evangelization seen as development

The pre-occupation with life and its sharing figures prominently also in the emphasis on development. This is why theology in India persistently tends to see evangelization as directed towards the growth of the total man and not just towards ecclesial growth or spiritual growth. *In the growth of man whether it is social, cultural, economic or religious Indian theology sees first and foremost the enduring action of the Life-giving Christ.* Seen from this view-point, the ecclesial dimension is only part of the concern – a part which by no amount of argumentation or interpretation can be equated with the whole. Of course it must be made clear that there is no denial of the ecclesial dimension but only that this is the main end. It is something included in it. A change of perspective has taken place, and communion and development seem to be more in tune with this change as the end of evangelization than preaching the Gospel or planting the Church.

4. (1) *Witness is understood as related more to a silent but effective communication and transformation of Life than to a verbal announcement effected through some organized external activity.* Let us first consider this understanding of witness as applied to the religious context of India. In the Indian categories, religion is a matter of realization; its transmission or spread is understood in terms of transferring to others one's lived experience in concrete terms. Against this background, one witnesses to

Christ and leads another to acceptance of Christ only in the context of sharing or transferring one's Christ-experience. Witness is to be linked with the movement of life, silent but forceful. It is not externally so expressive as internally impressive, and expressed not so much in terms of intellect as in those of the heart, not verbally so eloquent as internally compelling, not externally so aggressive as internally drawing, not so much static and institutionalized as penetrating and transforming life.

It seems that the kind of witness that suits India's religious genius is not an aggressive type whose example we see in the missionary activity of earlier times. It consisted in confrontation, attacking other religions, going out and preaching at every street corner or in market place, and going from house to house and making the presence of Christianity felt through countless institutions of massive structures.

This type of witnessing, even in its legitimate and healthy aspect, is not the only type sanctioned in the New Testament or practised by the early Church. It is beyond the scope of this article to bring out this point through an exegetic study. There are, however, several illuminating studies made by scholars in India on this point.<sup>14</sup> Sister Sara Grant has very aptly summarized some of them: "The affinity between John's understanding of evangelization and that of the Indian Church is deeply reassuring, especially perhaps on three points: the need for interiority, the reality of the Incarnation - "the Word became flesh" - and the role of the local Christian community in the communication of "the eternal life which was with the father and was made known to us", and which must be shared as a vital experience. "What we have seen and heard we tell to you also, so that you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ".<sup>15</sup> In other words, the kind of witnessing which the Indian theology of evangelization stresses is based on a "two-fold process of experiencing and sharing the

14. Sara Grant, "Contemplation and Evangelization in the Indian Church", *Clergy Monthly*, April, 1974, 146-163.

15. Legrand, Pathrapankal, Vellanickal, *Good News and Witness*, Bangalore 1973, p. 167.

Christ-event".<sup>16</sup> And this emphasis is very much in accordance with the conception of the end of evangelization as communion and fellowship. This shift of emphasis from an 'aggressive' to a silent but sharing and transforming type of witnessing should not be interpreted as a sign of the lack of fearlessness to proclaim the Gospel. On the contrary, it is to be understood as a kind of witness in line with the religious genius of a people<sup>17</sup>, which is at the same time sanctioned at least by St. John's idea of witness.

4. (2) Witness in relation to the second focal point of the theology of evangelization in India, i. e., inasmuch as it addresses itself to the struggles of the people, *is again understood as more related to the transformation of life than to mere verbal announcement*. As we have seen in Documents and in the theology of M. M. Thomas and D. S. Amalorpavadass, the Christian witness gains credibility especially through involvement in national reconstruction. This point is very clear and, therefore, is not elucidated further than to say that this understanding of witness which entails involvement in the struggles of the people and transformation of human life at its manifold levels perfectly suits the aim of evangelization as development.

#### 5. Towards a new style of communitarian experience of Christ and its expression

In the Indian theology of evangelization we can unmistakably perceive an inner movement seeking a new style of communitarian experience of Christ and its expression. One cannot as yet define it in clear-cut terms. But it is inevitable that this movement will gather momentum in the course of time. This can be emphatically affirmed in view of the strong tendencies which this study has been able to identify. These tendencies mainly consist, first of all, in the recognition of the inter-relatedness of the Church with other faith-communities on the basis of Christ's presence in them and the consequent readiness for, and the possibility of, an 'inter-faith communion', secondly, in conceiving the end of evangelization as communion and

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16. Sara Grant, op. cit. p. 162 bottom.

17. Cf. Acts of the Apostles, 15-23 - 29.

development, and, thirdly, in understanding witness as essentially related to a sharing of Christ-experience and transformation of human life in all its dimensions. All these factors naturally lead to a rethinking on the traditional ecclesial structures in view of a new kind of communitarian Christ-experience and its expression.

As stated above, the elements of this rethinking are still in a very undefinable stage. The stand taken by R. Panikkar and M. M. Thomas in this regard have been, to some extent, clearly spelt out. Their viewpoints are perhaps acceptable *in toto*. If we go to the collective thinking expressed through the common Declarations we will see practically nothing clearly spelt out on the question under consideration. However, the following elements in it seem to point to a deep awareness of the need for a new style of a communitarian Christ-experience and its community-expression.

5 (1) First of all we see in the documents frequent references to the Spirit and the vital *need for following His lead. Implied here is the awareness of the necessity of going beyond certain present institutional structures for the sake of entering into a greater communion with men of all faiths.* The frequent references in the documents to the Spirit, and the need of obeying Him, remind us of the Jerusalem Council in which the Spirit led the Apostles to the realization that evangelization was not identical with Judaization and that it was more a matter of communicating the faith and life in Jesus Christ than extending some Judaic customs and rites.<sup>18</sup> For example, in the Declaration of the All India Seminar we read: "In this age of transition the Church herself has been awakened to a new realization of the Christian vocation and of her responsibility for the world, which makes her less preoccupied with structures and channels of authority and more concerned with life of the Spirit."<sup>19</sup> "Evangelization, therefore, cannot be reduced to a matter of church organization... It is the duty of Church 'not to quench' the spirit, rather to open herself fully to the movement of the Spirit who blows where He wills

18. *All-India Seminar on Church in India Today*, op. cit., p. 239.

19. J. Pathrapankal (ed.), *Service and Salvation*, op. cit. p. 6-7.



(John 3. 8). The Church in India thus tries to co-operate towards the accomplishment of the universal brotherhood of all men across all barriers which separate and alienate men from one another" (Nagpur Declaration).<sup>20</sup> "We must first understand a new Jesus who . . . shows us a new way of being with God as our Father, in service and solidarity with our brothers and sisters" (All-India Seminar Declaration).<sup>21</sup> "We realize that this is the Lord's Hour to share His Light and Life with many more fellow-Indians who have been mysteriously prepared by His own Spirit for Christ's community of love" (Declaration of the Patna Consultation).<sup>22</sup> "This is Church, the communion of those who live in Jesus Christ, who with him know that God is their Father, and in his Spirit are united as his brothers" (Nagpur Declaration).<sup>23</sup> "By evangelization we mean the imparting of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, through which men are enabled to share in the spirit of Christ" (Nagpur Declaration).<sup>24</sup>

Any number of similar quotations can be adduced, which convey the idea that the Church is a communion of men in Jesus Christ through His Spirit and that this communion is possible also with those who are not strictly within the institutional structures of the Church and that our preoccupation should be more with this communion and sharing than with structures meant for this communion.

5 (2) The same idea is expressed *in the context of the people's struggles for a fuller human life when the Documents see evangelization as a process to effect the unity and solidarity of mankind in the New Humanity of Jesus Christ*. This idea is repeated in them *ad nauseam*. "As the minister of the purifying and transforming grace of Christ, it (Church) wills to bring back to God the whole of creation, and longs for the day when all human divisions having been overcome, Christ will stand at the head of

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20. *All India Seminar on Church in India Today*, op. cit., p. 242.

21. *Light, Life we seek to share*, Bangalore 1973, p. 369.

22. J. Pathrapankal (ed.) *Service and Salvation*, op. cit., p. 2.

23. *ibid*, p. 6.

24. *ibid*, p. 3.

a new humanity finally made one and filled with his fulness" (Nagpur Declaration).<sup>25</sup> "As disciples of the Lord, sent forth to serve and even wash one another's feet, we wish to give ourselves and what we have to serve where service is most needed, in building up a new order worthy of man and expressive of God's kingdom" (Declaration of the All-India Seminar).<sup>26</sup> "By humanizing social conditions, overcoming tensions and conflicts, fighting corruption, widening aspirations and by transforming cultural, social and political institutions, she should proclaim Christ as the one who alone can answer finally to every personal quest for transcendence and human wholeness" (CBCI Communication).<sup>27</sup> "We recognize such works (for example, education, social, medical and all works for a just society) as evangelization when they are expressive of, and transparent to, the action of God who is bringing about the New Creation, and when they manifest God's demand for that radical renewal of heart which results in a change of human society and a transformation of the human conscience" (CBCI Communication).<sup>28</sup> The findings of the Narsapur consultation understands conversion simply as no more than an extension of the institutional Church, but as New Creation<sup>29</sup> and stresses the point that the churches have come to realize the point that their mission "does not simply lie in the extension of their boundaries, but primarily in the witness to Jesus Christ, and proclamation of his kingdom over all the realms of the created world".<sup>30</sup> The leading thought in all these quotations is *that an abiding unity of mankind is effected in and through the New Humanity of Jesus Christ and that this unity and solidarity of mankind in Jesus Christ is realizable in the common efforts and struggles of people for a fuller human life and not within the institutional structures of the Church alone.*

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25. *All-India Seminar on Church in India Today*, op. cit., p. 245.

26. *Report of CBCI Calcutta*, 1974, CBCI Centre New Delhi, 1974, p. 130.

27. *ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

28. Findings of the National Consultation of the Mission of the Church in Contemporary India, op. cit., p. 12.

29. *ibid.*, p. 23.

6 Plainly enough, the Indian theology of evangelization has still to evolve a clearer understanding of the nature of the communion and solidarity with others in relation to the historical revelation and the hierarchical, sacramental and dogmatic aspects of the present community structure of the Church. But the leading trend at present is not first to define this question dogmatically but to seek a greater communion and solidarity with others in Christ, and in the New Humanity effected through Him, without in anyway denying the need and uniqueness of the means of salvation in the Church. In other words, there is an attempt to evolve a theology of evangelization, not from a certain pre-defined set of ecclesiological principles, but from the very context in which the Church in India is engaged in her task of evangelization.

This attempt may have its own merits and demerits but they are not the main question here. This task has to wait until the theology in India has evolved certain clearly definable positions. However, even before such positions are reached, it may be possible to identify certain emphases and leading currents in its evolving stages. This was mainly what was undertaken, and it has been shown that the spearhead of the forces in the evolving Indian theology of evangelization is the conception that the end of evangelization is communion and development. The Church in India, of course, has not called into question the validity of conceiving of the main aims of evangelization as preaching the Gospel or planting the Church. But as this study of the leading tendencies in Indian theological thinking shows, the setting up of preaching and planting the Church as the most important aims of evangelization does not fully and spontaneously correspond with the focal points of evangelization in the context of the local Church of India at present. This is not merely because preaching and 'planting' are terms and concepts associated with a phase in the history of mission-activity when evangelization was often carried on in collaboration with certain colonial powers, and almost identified with the Church of Europe, Western culture, and the Western mentality and ecclesiology; not only because these terms and concepts have been associated with a phase of mission history when the positive values in other religions and the principle of incarnation were not fully taken into account; not only because these terms and concepts were associated with a period in mission

history when the growth of the Church was measured more in terms of external, institutional growth than in terms of internal and qualitative change. This is mainly because these terms and the concepts they evoke cannot do full justice to the Indian Church's present awareness of her task in relation to certain situations, viz., the richness of religious experience, the dynamism of a youthful nation and the bitterness and aspirations of suffering and struggling millions.

This short study on the converging trends in the Indian theology of evangelization can now be concluded. *We have seen that these trends are woven around Communion and Development. Communion and Development are in their turn focused on Christ: Christ the Life in which all from a community of mutual sharing; Christ, the prototype of the New Humanity, the common end of all, which is the concretization of the communion.* In other words, evangelization aims at a mutually complementary double process: first of all a communion in Christ in which the Church and men of different faiths and ideologies share their experience of the ultimate values and secondly, an exchange of brotherly love in a tangible form as they strive together and co-operate with each other for a common end, i. e., a fuller and more authentic human life: the New Creation.

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# The Missionary Dimension of Islam

“I shall not worship that which ye worship  
Nor will ye worship that which I worship  
Unto you your religion and unto me my religion”  
(109: 4-6).

The rapid spread of Islam throughout the world, within a few centuries of its emergence caused great anxiety and astonishment even in the minds of its critics. Neither the devout Muslim view that it was purely a religious movement engaged in a far-sighted effort to save the world, by force if necessary, nor the medieval Christian view that it was the out-growth first of pure imposture and then of greed, will bear scrutiny. Unprejudiced historians will readily agree that both undue religious zeal and economic greed have played their respective parts as motivating impulses of the speedy growth of Islam, at least in its early stages. In this context, it is proper to try to see the correct Quranic teaching on the missionary dimension of the Islamic Faith.

## Mission of Islam

The Mission of Islam in the world is to establish peace and brotherhood. The name, ‘Islam’ itself points to this. The root-meaning of the word ‘Islam’ is ‘to enter into peace’,<sup>1</sup> and a Muslim is one who makes his peace with God and man. Maulana Muhammad Ali explains it as follows: “Peace with God implies complete submission to His Will and peace with man is not only to refrain from evil or injury to another but also to do good for him.”<sup>2</sup> Both these ideas find expression in the

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1. Islam means ‘entering into Salm’; ‘salm’ and ‘silm’ both signify ‘peace’. The Quran uses both these words in the sense of peace. cfr. 2: 208; 8: 61.

2. Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, S. Chand & Co., Ram Nagar, New Delhi-55; p. 2.

Quran. "... but whosoever surrendereth his purpose to Allah while doing good, his reward is with the Lord; and there shall be no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve" (2: 112). Thus Islam is the religion of peace and its two basic doctrines, the Unity of God and the unity of brotherhood of the human race, afford positive proof of its being directed to the highest ideals. Man has to re-establish his broken relationship with God, who is the source of peace, for the sake of his personal as well as collective salvation. The prophet of Islam says, "O! God, You are peace and from You peace stems."<sup>3</sup> Man will be able to do justice to himself and to his fellowmen only by examining his own actions in the light of divine Commandments. So in order to gain real, internal peace, Islam tries to create in man a deep sense of moral responsibility before God.<sup>4</sup> This will enable him to establish justice on all grounds of human society, without which talk about peace will remain an empty sentiment.

### **Islam, a universal religion**

From the very outset, Islam proclaimed itself to be a strictly Monotheistic Faith accepting God alone as the moral improver and sustainer of 'that there' (82: 7). This points to the universality of Islam. Though it is the youngest among the world religions, it is not the least but the perfect one, which contains within itself all religions that preceded it. It is a fundamental doctrine of Islam that a Muslim must believe in all the prophets who were raised up before Muhammed. In this sense Islam is not a new religion but the continuation and completion of what was revealed before it.

"Say (unto them, O! Muhammad): we follow the religion of Abraham, the upright .... Say (O! Muslims) we believe in Allah and that which was revealed unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isac and Jacob and the tribes and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the prophet received from

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3. Sunan of al - Darimi 1/311 (Damascus, 1349).

4. Dr. Rashid Ahmad Jullundry, Islam, Bulletin, Secretaries Pro. Non Christianis, Palazzo S. Calisto Citta del Vaticano 1976-XI/2 32, p. 189.

their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them (2: 135, 6).<sup>5</sup>”

A muslim is thus bound to believe not only in the prophets of the Old Testament but also in all the prophets of the world and in all revealed Scriptures. Thus Islam does nothing but restate and verify the perennial truth enshrined in the other religious traditions (2: 38, 41, 49, 89, 91, 97, 101, 3: 81, 84).

### Significance of Islam

Now one may ask, if Muhammad's emergence in the galaxy of the prophets has nothing new or unique about it, what is the significance of the religion preached by him? The answer to this question lies in the assumption that Muhammad is the final prophet through whom God completed and perfected His dialogue with man. He is the 'seal of the prophets' and a pattern of excellence for the believers. "There is no reproach for the prophet. He is the messenger of Allah and the seal of the prophets.... O! Prophet, Lo! We have sent thee as a witness and a bringer of good teachings and a warner. And as a lamp that giveth light" (3: 40-46). Thus in addition to being the last religion of the world, and an all inclusive religion, Islam is the perfect expression of the Divine Will. The Quran explains it as follows: "This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed my favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM" (5: 3). Commenting on this verse Maulana Muhammad Ali says, "Like every other form of consciousness, the religious consciousness of man has developed slowly and gradually down the ages, and the revelation of the Great Truth from on High was thus brought to perfection in Islam". He identifies Muhammad as the Spirit of Truth (Holy Spirit) whom Jesus promised to send to his disciples (Jn. 16: 12-13). Muhammad Ali summarizes the importance of the religion of Islam in the following words:

"It is the great mission of Islam to bring about peace in the world by establishing a brotherhood of all the religions of the world, to gather together all the religious truths contained in previous religions, to correct their errors and to sift the true from the

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5. Maulana Muhammad Ali, op. cit, p. 5.

false, to preach the eternal verities which had not before been preached on account of the special circumstances of any race or society in the early stages of its development, and last of all to meet all the moral and spiritual requirements of an ever advancing humanity.”<sup>6</sup>

### Islam, ‘the only religion’

God has prescribed and perfected the religion of Islam as the only religion for mankind. “I have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam.” (5: 3) According to many Muslim thinkers this verse indicates that men are left with no choice but to accept Islam as their religion. The Quran appears to threaten the believers in religions other than Islam with dire consequences after death. “And those seeketh as religion other than the Surrender (AL-ISLAM) to Allah it will not be accepted from him and he will be a loser in the hereafter.” (3; 85) Muhammad Ali points out Islam is the greatest spiritual force in the world, the basis of a lasting civilisation and the greatest unifying force which offers a solution of the great world problems.

The Quran teaches that a believing slave is better than a polytheist however good. “Wed not idolatresses till they believe; for lo! a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress though she please you” (2; 221). The Quran forbids the believers even to be friendly with the unbelievers: “Let not the believers take disbelievers for their friends in preference to believers. Whoso doth that hath no connection with Allah unless (it be) that ye but guard yourselves against them, taking (as it were) scrutiny” (3: 28, 118). It sometimes invites the believers to make war on the unbelievers especially the polytheists, for they are impure or unclean and all their actions are in vain.<sup>7</sup> To cap it all Islam appears to adjudge the polytheists the most abominable of sinners. “Allah forgiveth not that a partner should be ascribed unto him. He forgiveth (all) save that to whom he will. Whoso ascribeth partners to Allah he hath indeed invented a

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6. Ibid. p. 8-10.

7. Harsh Narain, Feasibility of a Dialogue between Hinduism and Islam, Islam and the Modern Age (Quarterly) Jamia Nagar, New Delhi - 110025 Vo. VI No. 4, p. 58.



tremendous sin... Those are they whom Allah hath cursed and he whom Allah hath cursed, thou (O! Muhammad) will find for him no helper." (4: 48-52) The Quran finally declares that the Muslim community is the best community. "Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in Allah. And if the people of the Scripture had believed, it had been better for them." (3: 116)

### **Quran 'the best guidance'**

The Holy Quran which is assumed to embody the complete and perfect written word of God is the best guidance for mankind. It is of supernatural origin. It first removes the doubt of Muhammad himself: "And if thou (Muhammad) are in doubt concerning that which we reveal unto thee, then question those who read the Scripture (that was before thee). Verily, the truth from thy Lord hath come unto thee. So be not thou of the waverers" (10: 95). Then it exhorts all mankind to accept it as their guide: "O! Mankind, now hath the truth from your Lord come unto you. So whosoever is guided, is guided only for the good of his soul, and whosoever erreth erreth only against it (10:109), it is a clear proof given to man and it contains correct scriptures". It is the criterion of the moral order. "The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for mankind, and clear proof of the guidance and the criterion of right and wrong" (2: 185). Now the guidance being given, it is left to each individual to accept or refuse it. "We have shown him the way, whether he be grateful or disbelieving" (76: 3). The conclusion of these Quranic verses would be that man has been given final and perfect guidance through the prophet Muhammad and only those who accept it and live accordingly will be deemed worthy of reward on the day of Judgement. "Verily there cometh unto you from me a guidance and whoso followeth my guidance, there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve" (2:38).

### **Fruits of conversion**

The acceptance of Islamic ideals and principles as envisaged in the Quran and lived by the early community (salafa) will probably act as a liberating factor for those who have a yearning for true peace of mind. Their admission to the community of the faithful will bring about their enlightenment and spiritual

contentment. The one who embraced Islam, leaving aside his former religion will soon recognise that in the present anarchic world, the panacea for all troubles lies in accepting and adhering to the message of Muhammad.

Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal, in his thought provoking book, *The Mission of Islam*, give a summary of the fruits of conversion to Islam.<sup>8</sup> First of all he says, the supreme voice of the one and only God called Allah, the Almighty, will unite the believers into one sacred and strong community which is immune to theoretical innovations. The word of Allah, called the Quran, will provide him with a code of conduct, a constitution for the state and society, that will guide him to the ultimate goal of spiritual solace and temporal satisfaction. He will enjoy a political set-up advocating and advancing high ideology and institutions which remove and annul every possibility of oppression of man by man, by upholding the inviolable rights of all. Islam will protect him through an economic system that denounces special privileges, guarantees conditions of achieving prosperity to all, rejects every form of exploitation and makes the government and affluent men responsible for the maintenance and progress of the poor and the needy. He will definitely appreciate the simple healthy and meaningful prayers and worship, with no pompous and complicated ceremonies, which confer upon him the rewards of discipline and a sense of mutual dependence in life.

Islam does not make a distinction between the sacred and the secular. The total liberation of man in all spheres of life is the goal of Islam. Hence it has prescribed detailed rules concerning every aspect of life. To an outsider this may appear too legalistic in this fast-changing world, but to an ardent adherent of Islam, these are the things which unite him to the community of believers, where love of God and concern for others is the way of life. Islam has succeeded remarkably in engendering a sense of belonging to the community of believers, and it is this joy of finding security in the community that has won more converts to Islam than any other means. In this context, it is worth while sharing the experience of Sir Archibald Hamilton of England; "In becoming a Muslim I have merely obeyed the dict-

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8. As quoted by Iqbal Sheikh Mohammad, *The Mission of Islam*, Vikas Publishing House Put Ltd, N. Delhi 1977, p. 30.

ates of my conscience and have since felt a better and truer man. There is no religion that is so maligned by the ignorant and biased as is Islam; yet if people only knew it, it is the only true solution for the problem of Socialism, inasmuch as it is the religion of the strong for the weak, of the rich for the poor".<sup>9</sup> In short, the fruits of conversion to Islam are manifold, covering all the exigencies of human existence, in both realm of here and hereafter.

### Believers and non-believers

The Quran makes a clear-cut distinction between the believers and non-believers and says that while the former will enjoy peace in paradise, the latter will be condemned to eternal fire. The introductory verses of the Second Chapter of the Quran bring this out clearly.

"This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt...who believe in the unseen and established worship and spend of what we have bestowed upon them; and who believe in that which is revealed unto thee (Muhammed) and that which was revealed before thee and are certain of the hereafter...these depend on guidance from their Lord. These are the successful" (2; 2-5). God has promised paradise for the believers. "Give glad tidings (O! Muhammad) unto those who believe and do good works; that theirs are Gardens underneath which rivers flow...there for them are pure companions; there forever they abide" (2;25).

The unbelievers are threatened with severe punishment: "As for the disbelievers...Allah hath sealed their hearing and their hearts and on their eyes there is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom" (2: 6-7, 39). The whole world, of Scripture (Jews and Christians) was looking for the perfect revelation of God. But when God sent it through His Messenger (Muhammad) the world was not ready to accept it. These unbelievers are worthy of eternal punishment. "They have incurred anger upon anger. For disbelievers is a shameful doom" (2; 90).

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9. Mushirul Haq, 'Muslim Understanding of the Hindu Religion', *Islam And the Modern Age*, Vo. IV; No. 4, p. 71.

# Muslims, 'the believers'

According to the Quran Muslims are the true believers since all others have turned a deaf ear to the clear Revelation that was sent down through the prophet, Muhammad. Islam is the right religion where there is no altering the (laws of) Allah's creation (30:30). Members of the Islamic Community are the best people of the world because they live according to the clear proof that was given to them: "Ye are the best community" (3:110). The sin of the unbelievers consists in this: that they refuse to accept Muhammad as the messenger of God: "And whoso opposeth the messenger after the guidance of Allah hath been manifested unto him, and followeth other than the believers' way, we appoint for him, that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto hell—hapless journey's end" (4:115). Strict warning is given to those who persecute the believers: "Lo! they who persecute believing men and believing women and repent not, theirs verily will be the doom of hell and theirs the doom of burning" (85:10). It is due to their jealousy that the people of the Scripture refuse to acknowledge Muhammad as the messenger of God: "Would you question your messenger as Moses was questioned aforetime? He who chooseth disbelief instead of faith verily he hath gone astray from the plain road" (2:108). Prophet Muhammad being the last in the series for the entire universe, for all time is now to be obeyed by everyone. His religion—Islam has repealed all other religions. People coming after him, but not those who preceded him, can be considered infidels (Kafir) if they do not follow him.<sup>10</sup> The famous philosopher poet Muhammad Iqbal portrays a believer (Mumin) as follows:

"Every moment the Muslim reveals new graces, new charms,  
In his words and actions he bears testimony to God!  
Righteous indignation and forgiveness, purity and power  
When these four elements combine they make a true Muslim!  
Made of clay, he is neighbour to the Angel Gabriel....<sup>11</sup>"

10. Lokhandwalla (Ed) *India and Contemporary Islam*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1971, p. 15.

11. Abdul Majid Khan, *Islam and other Religions and Culture*, India Contemporary Islam, (edited) by Lokhandawala Indian Institute of Advanced study, Simla, 1971, p. 88.



### Why Islam?

If God has sent his messengers to each nation with his message, what is the importance of Islam? For Muslim thinkers Islam is the most perfect religion, since, apart from its universal character, the former religions have been corrupted by their followers. The people of 'the Book', Jews and Christians, are held to have deliberately falsified their Scriptures. "The Quran condemns many of the doctrines taught by the followers of the earlier Scriptures and this shows that while their origin is admitted to be divine, it is at the same time pointed out that these books have not come down to us in their original purity, and that the truth revealed in them has been mixed up with errors due to alterations effected by human hands".<sup>12</sup> The Christians worship Jesus blasphemously. Later generations have been more sincere, but were certainly misguided, so that a new revelation in the form of the Quran became necessary. Inasmuch as Islam stands for universal submission to God it is different from Judaism which is based on the conception of a particular covenant or a specially chosen people.<sup>13</sup> The Quran refutes the claim of the Jews and Christians that they are the only owners of heaven. "And they say! None entereth paradise unless he be a Jew or Christian. These are their own desires" (2: 111). The Quran has also done away with the defects of earlier books. Thus it is not only the perfection and completion of the former revelations but also their guardian and judge.

### Dialogical approach

So far only the negative attitude of Islam towards other religions has been discussed. But this is only one side of the coin. There are contrary provisions too in the Quran which clearly teach that there should be no use of force in religion. As has been pointed out, the Quran demands from the Muslims an equal respect and faith in all the prophets of the world (2: 136, 285, 3: 84). God has shown to every religious community or culture its own way of worship about which people must not quarrel with one another.<sup>14</sup> Islam or the Quran does nothing but restate and verify the perennial truth enshrined in other religious

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12. Maulana Muhammad Ali, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

13. Harsh Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

14. Abdul Majid Khan *op. cit.*, p. 90.

traditions (2: 38, 41, 89, 91, 3: 3, 81). It is indeed significant that the Quran sometimes designates other religions as Islam and their followers as Muslims (2: 132, 3: 67). A few narrow-minded theologians, owing to their ignorance and prejudice, argue that the Muslims are the only true believers who would be saved. But the Quran quite emphatically declares that all the God-fearing non-Muslims also will equally be rewarded with eternal peace. "Lo! Those who read the Scripture of Allah and establish worship, and spend of that which we have bestowed on them secretly and openly they look forward to imperishable gain, that he will pay them their wages and increase them of his grace (34: 29-30). The characteristic mark of righteousness is not that whether one has become a Muslim or not but whether he carries out his duties towards God and his brethren faithfully in a spirit of surrender to God.

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces to the East and West, but righteous is he who believeth in Allah and the last day and the angels and the Scripture and the prophets; and give this wealth, for love of Him, to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy. . . And those who observeth proper worship, payeth the poordue and those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress. Such are they who are sincere. Such are the God-fearing" (2: 177).

Thus Islam fully acknowledges, owns and respects all other religions worth the name, and exhorts its followers to believe in all of them equally: Since Islam is the youngest of the Semitic religions it can be fruitfully interpreted only with reference to, and in the context of, those religions especially Judaism and Christianity. Muhammad preached not only love and respect for the founders of the great religions of the world but also faith in them. Tolerance is not a sufficiently precise term to indicate the breadth of accommodativeness of Islam towards other religions.<sup>15</sup> In this context, it is worth quoting chapter 109 of the Quran:

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15. Harsh Narain, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

“Say, O! Disbelievers,  
 I worship not that which ye worship;  
 Nor worship ye that which I worship.  
 And I shall not worship that which ye worship,  
 Nor will ye worship that which I worship,  
 Unto you, your religion and unto me, my religion.” (109: 1-6)

### The Dilemma?

We are now confronted with two opposite series of Quranic texts, one condemning all disbelievers and the other tolerating, supporting and appreciating other religions. We have to bear in mind that the religious Scriptures are not well written text-books or exercises in a systematic exhibition of logical consistency at every step. In them there is much scope for reading between the lines. So it is but natural that the majority of traditional commentators on the Quran regard those verses which seem to be unfriendly to other religions as absolute, some, going to the extent of declaring those verses which are friendly towards other religions as abrogated thereby. Harsh Narain points out clearly that the fundamental teachings of Quran which are friendly towards other religions, and which were avowedly the *raison etre* of Islam, seem to have a greater claim to be adjudged absolute than the later ones which appear to militate against them.<sup>16</sup> There is, besides, enough reason to believe that the later teachings, seemingly unfriendly to other religions were dictated by the exigencies of the situation and are supposed to come into play only in a like situation. They were promulgated as a result of the prophet's bitter experiences of different religions by which he was surrounded and persecuted. For the support of such an approach we have such a passage as this, in the Quran:

“God does not forbid you to befriend those who did not make a war upon you on account of your religion and drive you out from your homeland. You must do good to them and deal justly with them. Ho! God loves the just. God does indeed forbid you to befriend those who made war upon you on account of your religion drove you out from your homeland.

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16. John B. Noss., *Man's Religions*, p. 535.

and helped (so) drive you out. Whoever befriends them all such are wrong-doers”

(Al - Mumtahina: 8-9)

## The spread of Islam

We do not see a clear injunction in the Quran given to the Muslims to go and preach and to increase their number. But we see the missionary activities undertaken by the Muslims all over the world from the very early days of Islam, and their number today amounts to 550 million. It is seriously doubted whether the spread of Islam at least in its early stages was the result of calculation. It would be closer to the mark to say that Muhammad unified the Bedouins for the first time in their history and thus made it possible for them, as a potentially powerful military group, to yoke together their economic need and their religious faith in an overwhelming drive out of the desert into the lands where plenty beckoned.<sup>17</sup> Their astonishing and miraculous conquest of the Near East enabled them to spread their faith throughout the conquered lands. The same story was repeated in North Africa, Central Asia, *Sind*, Spain, Russia, India, Asia Minor and many other parts of the world. Political power, war in many cases, was the main machinery that helped Islam most to penetrate into those regions. But it should not be surmised from this that the Muslims forced all the conquered to accept Islam. This would be far from the truth. European writers, while discussing this point, generally assume that the Quran offered only one of the two alternatives, Islam or death, to non-Muslims. The Jews and Christians were given a somewhat more lenient treatment since they could save their lives by the payment of ‘Jizya’,<sup>18</sup> a tax taken from the free non-Muslim subjects of a Muslim Government whereby they ratified the compact that ensured their protection. It was sanctioned by the Quran. “Fight those who don’t believe in Allah... those who have been given the Book, until they pay the Jizya in acknowledgement of superiority and are in a state of subjection” (9: 29). However, Muslim writers deny that Jizya was a religious tax and claim that it was only one of the sources of income for carrying out the

17. Maulana Muhammad Ali, op. cit., p. 576.

18. Lokhandawalla, S. T. (Ed), op. cit, p. 11.



functions of the Central Government which undertook the protection of the non-Muslims, who were exempted from compulsory military service. It is a fact of history that many accepted Islam to avoid this heavy tax. High government offices, which were restricted only to the Muslims, also attracted non-Muslims to the fold of Islam.

Many others were attracted by the communitarian dimensions of Islam: its universal approach to all religions, its respect for man as man, its emphasis on tolerance as woven into the good life, its uncompromising acceptance of the principles of democracy and fraternity, its total rejection of the idea of race-superiority.<sup>19</sup> The Muslims could also win over some converts by way of persuasion. Their argument could be summarized as follows: We were a poor people wandering in the desert without a proper guide. Prophet Muhammad came to us with a divine message. When we accepted him and the Quran he brought from God, God blessed us abundantly with all sorts of prosperity. So this is definitely the religion of God. Why don't you accept it so that you also might be blessed by God and get a share in the good fortunes of the community?"

Quranic instructions about the manner of propagating Islam are clearly laid down in terms that "introduced a social and spiritual criterion into the discussion and removed the subject from the merely military and polemical level to that of mutual responsibility, respect, and reason and patience."<sup>20</sup> However, the Muslims are forbidden to use other tactics or force while winning or making converts.

The Muslims, as a whole, are unhappy with the impression given by Western scholars that the spread of Islam was carried out by the sword in a savage and bloody attempt to extend their spiritual and temporal sway. The Quran categorically rejects the idea of religion being forced on any individual or group. Whatever the aberrations from which individual rulers or propagandists

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19. David A. Graig, *Quranic Justification for Jihad*, Bulletin of Christian Institute of Islamic Studies, Hyderabad, Vo. III, No. 2, p. 20.

20. Lokhandawalla (Ed) op. cit, p. 9.

may have suffered, or the warped interpretations of Islam given by some of its fanatical exponents, one can find no justification whatever in Islam for its forced imposition on others.<sup>21</sup> The classical text of Quran, in this context, is taken from the Second Chapter. "There is no compulsion in religion" (2: 256). The Quran's clear dictum which provides the sanction for the fullest spirit of toleration in all religious matters is 'Lakum dinukum wa liya dīn' ("Your religion for you; mine for me"). Then what are you quarreling about?" (109: 5). In another place, the Quran teaches how to preach to an idol-worshipper:

"If any agnostic or unbeliever comes to you asking for asylum (from enemies) your first duty is to give him asyln; then you should present to him (gently) the word of God; thereafter (without any conditions or obligations) you should see to it that he reaches a place of safety" (9: 6).

The aim of the missionary activities of a religion should be prompted by the sincere desire of its members to share their religious experience with others. So the Quran says, "Invite people to the path of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason with them in a better way" (16; 125).

## Conclusion

One of the basic principles of Islam is faith in all the prophets of the world. It, thus, preaches equal love for all, equal respect for all and equal faith in all. The Quranic foundations of such an approach have been examined. "We send messengers before them. There are some of them that we have mentioned to thee and there are others whom we have not mentioned to thee" (40: 78; 4: 164). Thus all the religions of the world are members of one family because they are all of divine origin.

But among all religions Islam logically believes that it is the most perfect religion since it is the youngest of the revealed religions. Its sacred book, the Quran, has corrected the defects, alterations and corruptions of the previous Scriptures. Still, Islam

teaches sympathetically that there is no compulsion in religion. (2: 256). Whoever believes in God and does good works will be saved.

There is a false notion in the minds of the critics of Islam, of course not without solid historical foundations, that the Muslims spread their religion by the force of their sword. To many non-Muslims, tolerance in Islam will look like a contradiction in terms, but for this, the responsibility does not lie with Islam or the Prophet, but with some of those who only professed to follow Islam, but at times failed to reach the standard it sets before its adherents. No attempt has been made in this paper to enter into the objectivity of the so-called historical data of the missionary activities of Islam. But it may be said that the forced conversions to Islam and the atrocities committed by the cruel Muslim rulers in the name of religion were not advocated by its revered prophet, who said, "There is no compulsion in religion. Unto you your religion and unto me my religion" (2: 256; 109: 6).

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# American and Indian Thought: Cross-Cultural Influences

India has had more influence on American thought than any other Asian culture or nation of cultures.<sup>1</sup> This is true in spite of the recent public acclaim for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with China and even though the closest ties between the United States and any Asian nation since World War II are those with Japan. Even so, a converse proposition: is emphasized here American thought and scholarship has had a significant influence on Indian thought, religious and philosophic.

Either influence, American on Indian or Indian on American, cannot be isolated from the other without some distortion. Also the intellectual and scholarly relationship between the two geographic areas have not existed in vacuum. Therefore, to be realistic, the influence in both directions has to be discussed and some individuals included from "third party countries", or Americans or Indians, who were influenced extensively by thinkers from them.

What indeed has taken place is a true revolution in the exchange of ideas and scholarship between the United States and India. From Emerson's day, Indian religious texts have attracted the attention of Americans beginning with the first organized translation efforts, mainly by European enterprise, not just because these texts were exotic or "mystical" but because the ideas contained within them seemed similar to those of various European and American forms of Idealism. This first phase of the revolution was a one-way street from India outward, and, with reference to American History, the date 1840 is chosen as a pivotal year. It was in that year that Emerson and Thoreau

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1. Dale Riepe, *The Philosophy of India and its Impact on American Thought*, American Lecture Series, 772; Bannerstone Division of American Lectures in Philosophy (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1970), p. 273. This is the most important volume on the area of American and Indian intellectual relations.



first published *The Dial* in the pages of which Indian religions and philosophies were seriously evaluated.

A period from the end of the nineteenth century to World War II encompasses the second phase of American and Indian intellectual relations. During this time-frame various Indian religious and philosophic traditions continued influencing American thinkers, but now with an added feature – in person. In the year 1893 Swami Vivekananda, along with other Indian representatives, attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and that year, therefore, is pivotal to the second phase. In addition, Americans from the Emerson period were appreciated by Indian philosophers, politicians, and social and religious reformers while the philosophers and scholars of the second phase, William James and Josiah Royce, to name a couple, were perpetuating the influence out of America by their active interest in Indian thought.

Finally we come to the present phase, a period both of diffusion and synthesis. There is no pivotal date but a series of them: 1939, 1949, 1959, and 1964. In these years four East-West conferences between Asian and American Philosophers took place in Hawaii under the leadership of Charles Moore. The revolution becomes apparent from these conferences onward. Americans are not only interpreting Indian ideas and thereby continuing Indian thought traditions in the wider, global phase of human relations, but Indian thought has been transformed by unavoidable American influences. India took the bold step of becoming missionary in America and, when the missionaries returned to India, they had been altered by American social concerns.

The beginnings of American scholarly interest in India are scattered. Albert Pike (1809–1891) of Little Rock, Arkansas, as an ex-Confederate general, studied Sanskrit and translate portions of the *Rg Veda*. Before him, Isaac Nordheimer in 1839, at the City University of New York, was probably the first teacher of Sanskrit in the United States. The first important attempt by Americans to formulate an idealistic philosophy of Transcendentalism is, for all practical purposes, the recognized beginning of a significant American interest in Indian thought. But the two

major names of this movement, themselves destined to be influences on India, are Emerson and Thoreau.

In his early years of speculation, Emerson probably used the terms "Indian", "mystical", and "superstitious" as synonyms. He saw that God was universal to all traditions, and the notion of his universality was primitively expressed in India. Then Emerson discovered the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Upanisads*, and the *Laws of Manu*. After reading these significant texts, he began to work out his own notion of the one Universal Mind or the Oversoul. He saw in the Indian identification of everything with Brahman a kindred sentiment. J. P. Rao Rayapati writes in his *Early American Interest in Vedanta*:

The publication of *The Dial* in 1840 obliged Emerson and Thoreau to examine methodically the available Vedic literature. In spite of all the wealth of this literature which had been available in English, French, and German translations and critical estimates since 1785... , they waited till 1840 to "plunge" deeply and enthusiastically into its study. This was the culmination of a long, gradual process in the dissemination of Vedic literature and proliferation of Vedantic ideas in America.<sup>2</sup>

Henry David Thoreau seems to have had less of a problem in recognizing India as more than superstitious. His conscience was thrown open radically to all influences, and he responded with vigor to them. It is no secret to many Americans that Thoreau's "Essay on Civil Disobedience" had a profound impact on Gandhi.

American interest during this first phase were not confined to the east coast region. Later in the century the St. Louis School of Philosophy developed along transcendentalist lines, and in turn it provoked a similar movement in Chicago which was associated with the foundation of *The Open Court* and *The Monist*. The German-born editor of these two journals from 1888-1919 was

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2. *Early American Interest in Vedanta: Pre-Emersonian Interest in Vedic Literature and Vedantic Philosophy*, (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1973), p. 103.

Paul Carus who distinguished himself as a devotee and scholar of Buddhism. In his famous book, *Gospel of Buddha according to Old Records* (1899), he drew extensive parallels between Buddhism and Christianity, and the book remains, to this day, a milestone in religious studies. Carus was probably the first thinker to influence the Buddhist world from American soil.

Let us consider, for a moment, the religious condition of nineteenth century India. Under British rule the scholastic period of Indian thought had come to a close. All sorts of customs and attitudes, especially in regard to religious privileges and rituals, which had proliferated during several centuries of Moslem domination, were in a pathetic state of degeneration. To read the great religious classics, as Emerson and others had done, and then to visit India, which few Americans did, must have entailed a very serious personal shock. Suffering, inequality, and all kinds of social abuses gave rise to the great religious reform movements of the nineteenth century, and the energy emanating from them was later transformed into the social and political reform movements which culminated in independence of Britain.

The most prominent of the religious reformers was Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1788-1833) who advocated a Vedānta philosophy in revivalist and popular clothing. He wrote extensively, addressing several books to English readers, and in 1828 he established the Brāhmo Samāj, the most well-known religious reform movement. He combined Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam on a Hindu structure and advocated primarily an ethical reform. Swami Nīhīlananda tells us in his essay in *The Indian Mind*:

The Brāhmo movement declared the supremacy of reason, advocated the ideals of the French Revolution, abolished the caste system among its members, sanctioned the remarriage of Hindu widows, stood for the emancipation of women, and agitated for the abolition of early marriages. Though a religious movement, the Brāhmo Samāj, under the influence of Western culture, advocated mainly social reform.<sup>3</sup>

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3. "The Realistic Aspect of Indian Spirituality", *The Indian Mind: Essentials of Indian Philosophy and Culture*, edited by Charles A. Moore (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii press, 1967), pp. 228-29.

Extremely orthodox Hindus reacted to Roy's methods of watering down their faith, and a counter-reformation movement, but still a reform movement, was founded by Swami Dayananda. It was called the Arya Samāj, and both movements set the tenor for a new phase of Hinduism which was soon to be let loose upon Europe and America. To this day America is the more fertile field for the missionary phase of Hinduism.

An extremist, spiritually motivated, and reform conscious movement, began in America during the nineteenth century which would be an encouragement for similar reform movements in India. With the arrival of Mme. Helena Petrovna Hahn Blavatsky in New York from Tibet in the year 1873, a theosophical club was formed. One of the most ardent supporters of the group was Col. Henry Steele Olcott (1832-1907), a retired Union Army officer. Through his efforts the Buddhist Theosophical Society was founded in New York and the *Theosophist* began publication around the year 1879. Both Blavatsky and Olcott embraced Buddhism on a trip to India and Ceylon and later established the head office of the Theosophical Society in Adyar, a suburb of Madras.

Annie Besant, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress and president of the Theosophical Society in 1906, in her own thought blended Hindu and Buddhist ideas with Christianity. The Theosophical Movement did indeed parallel the religious reform movements of India, and Nemai Sadhan Bose in a recent book entitled *The Indian National Movement: An Outline* made this comment:

The Theosophic movement, started in India by Col. H. S. Olcott and later led by Mrs. Annie Besant, strengthened the Hindu revival movement. The spirit of reawakened Hinduism found reflection in the growth of extremism towards the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

The single most important date in the history of American and Indian religious relations is September 11, 1893 when Swami

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4. (Calcutta : Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1965; 2nd revised and enlarged ed., 1974), p. 7.



Vivekananda delivered his first address before the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, which was held in conjunction with the Columbia Exposition. Several Indians attended as invited guests, but Vivekananda came to bring the news of his teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, who had died in 1886, and who had led the Indian religious reform movement which would be best known to Americans. Vivekananda was a revolutionary not simply because he tried to shake Americans and Europeans in their worship of gold, or because he preached against pseudo-religious monstrosities, but for the plain reason that he was a missionary. Buddhism had always been the great missionary fount in India. Hindus never had the impetus to leave their cultural surroundings, so that Vivekananda's decision to come to America to preach was monumental in the history of Hinduism.

In March 1892, prior to the Parliament, Vivekananda spoke with Robert Ingersoll about spirituality on the day the latter preached a funeral oration at Walt Whitman's grave. It was in the fitness of things that the first of Hindu missionaries was at the graveside because was it not Emerson who remarked that *Leaves of Grass* seemed to be a mixture of the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the New York Herald?<sup>5</sup> Romain Rolland in his biography of Vivekananda suggests that Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman appropriately prepared the way for the Indian teacher.<sup>6</sup> In 1894 Vivekananda founded the Vedanta Society in Brooklyn and lectured far and wide in the United States. In 1897 he returned to India a success probably because Americans have a deep and abiding belief in the human potential to save oneself, and a respect for freedom of spirit. He was able to convince his followers in India of the ideal of working in the world according to his concept of integral yoga, which is a Christian-Hindu synthesis, and in the years 1894-1929 no less than seventeen Ramakrishna teachers came to the United States to preach.

Vivekananda had hoped to combine the social action ideal he had experienced in the United States, which shamed the Hindu tolerance of human suffering, with the spiritual riches of India.

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5. See Riepe, p. 71.

6. See: *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1965).

He preached a practical Vedānta which was more successful here than a highly "otherworldly" mysticism. Finally Vivekananda, as a person and as a representative of a people suffering under British colonialism, awakened American sympathy. Dale Riepe has summarized this attitude well:

An unrecorded appeal of Indian philosophy is the feeling of sympathy Americans had with Indians who were still under the heavy hand of the English oppressor. This became more noticeable after the World Parliament of Religion in Chicago in 1893 where the delegates from India were able in a personal yet unobtrusive way to gain sympathy for the cause of Indian independence. But earlier, Americans were delighted to observe that after his defeat in America, General Cornwallis was again beaten at least once near Madras at the ancient city of Kāñchī (Conjeeveram) by Dravidian soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

In the meantime, the growth of the number of American experts in Oriental languages and cultures was steady. At Yale William Dwight Whitney (1827-94) held the first separate chair of Sanskrit. "Charles Rockwell Lanman (1850-1941) was a distinguished teacher of Sanskrit at Johns Hopkins and Harvard. Both scholars produced excellent grammars and readers that would be of use even to Indians. Lanman established the Harvard Oriental Series, and through his efforts Harvard became the major center of scholarship on India in this country. His colleague, Henry Clarke Warren (1854-99) became the first recognized Pali scholar in America and produced for the Harvard Oriental Series *Buddhism in Translation*. This book was indeed extraordinary because it was done entirely in America with printed texts and some manuscripts from the Brown University Library. James H. Woods (1864-1935) wrote several books on Yoga, and in 1914 his *The Yoga System of Patanjali* was published. Riepe writes concerning this book:

The importance of Woods' *The Yoga System of Patanjali* (1914) rests on the fact that it is the first technical and scholarly work on Indian philosophy written by an American professor of philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

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7. P, 29.

8. Ibid. p. 92.

William Ernest Hocking (1873-1966) who, as a youth had heard Vivekananda in Chicago, was assigned the task of working up a program in the area of Indian philosophy at Harvard. The environment at that university was excellent for such a prospect. The most venerated of American philosophers William James (1842-1910), while on the faculty at Harvard, had assumed the validity of all forms of spiritual experience in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Josiah Royce (1855-1916), the opposite of James philosophically, continued an American tradition of Idealism at Harvard. He in turn influenced a whole generation of Indian thinkers more than any other American philosopher. Later George Santayana (1863-1952), who located himself in a specific American investigation of Indian philosophy along with Emerson and Royce, joined the ranks at Harvard of thinkers and scholars influencing their Indian counterparts.

A very prominent person during this growth phase of Indian and American intellectual relations was Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (1863-1947). He was the son of the first Hindu to be called to the English bar. He became the keeper of Indian art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and remained in that position for thirty years until his death. He produced 572 scholarly and artistic works, and in 1924-25 founded the India Society and was its first president. This organization sponsored Indian leaders for lectures at American universities. For example, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan came to Cornell University in 1926 and later to the University of Chicago while at the same time Surendranath Dasgupta lectured at North-western University.

Several other important Indian leaders were coming for other reasons. Swami Abhedananda became the leader of the Vedanta Society in New York in 1897, and he later wrote, concerning his visit here:

In 1898, Professor William James held a discussion with me in his house on the problem of the 'Unity of the Ultimate Reality'. This discussion lasted for nearly four hours, in which Professor Royce, Professor Lanman, Professor Shaler, and Dr. James, the Chairman of Cambridge philosophical conferences

took my side and supported my arguments in favour of 'Unity'.<sup>9</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), the great poet of India during this period visited America on a lecture series and came under the influences of our literary tradition. Baily Millard recorded Tagore's remarks about this country:

Rabindranath Tagore took a different view of Whitman, whom he preferred to Emerson: 'Whitman gives me pictures—pictures. Through his work I know your country and can catch its heartbeat'.<sup>10</sup>

Indians were realizing that American scholars and intellectuals were producing a wealth of material useful to their intellectual, social, and political pursuits. Robert Ernest Hume (1877-1948), a professor at Union Theological Seminary, was the first theologian in the post-World War I era to make his mark on Indian thought. His translation of the *Upaniṣads* is considered to this day a very accurate English version of these texts. Franklin Edgerton (1885-1963) was at Yale from 1926 on, and his insights into the interplay of the various schools of Indian thought and his remarks on the significant philosophical terms of India are still respected. His translation of the *Bhagavad Gītā* is perhaps the most respected English one. America was maturing both in its indigenous philosophical traditions and in its ability to train Indologists.

With the end of World War II, India was on the verge of gaining her independence from the ruined British Empire and the reform process in India was nearing fruition. America's influence on the reform thinkers was gradually shifting to a sincere attempt at synthesis.

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9. See: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, eds., *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, 2nd rev. and enlarged ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 52.

10. "Rabindranath Tagore Discovers America," *The Bookman*, 44, (September 1916-February 1917), p. 248.



In the year 1939 the first East-West Philosophers Conference was held in Honolulu with representatives from China, Japan, and the United States. With the second conference in 1949 India was well represented and so too in the third and fourth conferences in 1959 and 1964. These conferences were largely the result of the work of Charles A. Moore (1901-1967). As a scholar and as the editor of *Philosophy East and West*, Moore was unequaled in his combination of talents:

His grasp of scholarship in a vast variety of Asian philosophical fields made him an editor without technical peer in this area and without sparing himself the daily detail that excellence in this field demands. With so many different Asian languages involved, his job was herculean. He knew personally nearly every important figure in world philosophy outside the socialist countries. And no other American has been so accredited with encouraging young philosophers to study the wisdom of Indians.<sup>11</sup>

Moore's work was not onesided. He wanted Americans to understand Indian thought, and he wanted Indians to understand American thought. Furthermore, he reacted strongly to the sweeping and general condemnations by Indians of western civilization as materialistic, enslaved to science, and entirely devoted to external reality. This attitude neglected some of the salient features of various American and European thought systems and was as incorrect as the Emersonian judgment that India was all mystical. To quote Riepe again:

Moore has received no higher praise than that awarded him by Principal Ramjee Singh of Bhagalpur, Bihar. He says that 'Professor Moore has done more in the cause of Indo-American good-will than even millions... of hard-earned American dollars flowing incessantly from Wall Street through the great White House.' I, for one, can agree with this whole-heartedly.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Riepe, pp. 210-211.

12. p. 215

The work of this final phase, in which we are still engaged, is the passage beyond superficial barriers, such as grouping thinkers according to East and West. The concern now is with the global tradition of all of humankind, and several traditions are brought together in synthesis. America's contribution here has been noted by a contemporary Indian philosopher, P. T. Raju :

My contention from the beginning has been that comparative studies should not only aim at pointing out similarities between Eastern and Western philosophies, but also their peculiarities, so that each will take proper notice of the other and progress by attempting new syntheses. It is really gratifying to note that this necessity is being recognised in the West also, particularly by some in America and by a few in England.<sup>13</sup>

The two major obstacles to healthy intellectual relations between India and the United States is a lack of Indian interest in the work of Americans and an American distrust of Indian ideas. A streak of pragmatism runs deep in American flesh along with its own markings of idealism. Many Americans still believe that India can offer no more than an isolated mysticism, the proof of which is the miserable condition of poverty and suffering that seems to haunt much of the Indian cityscape. Indeed what has happened to India may happen to any civilization, and perhaps Indians have learned, over the centuries, how to cope with the ever-changing human condition.

Indians on the other hand, believe that what has been said of significance is somewhere in their past, and hence nothing new, especially by individuals from recent nations like the United States, can really be formulated. Moreover, even though from their colonial past Indians have a dislike for the English, they retain an admiration for things English. Hence from Indians, Americans experience the same cold shoulder today which they received from the English in the last century.

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13. See P. T. Raju in Radhakrishnan and Muirhead, eds., *contemporary Indian Philosophy*, p. 510.

No persistent pleas can cure the situation, but what remains to be done is for the citizenry of both countries to study one another's traditions and the history of their relations. We are not going to need a revolution in education to allow students to be sensitive to the issue of America and her relations to several cultures. The one haunting problem of the world today, the survival of life on earth, will force educators, scholars, and religious leaders, as well as all people, to become sensitive to the fact that we are one country in a world of a variety of cultures. The demands of the future will force us to cross the boundaries of several cultures. Yet, that task will be easier if we begin as soon as possible to consider one fact at a time—in this case, American and Indian intellectual relations.

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